

VI

THE DOGMAS OF JUDAISM

THE object of this essay is to say about the dogmas of Judaism a word which I think ought not to be left unsaid.

In speaking of dogmas it must be understood that Judaism does not ascribe to them any saving power. The belief in a dogma or a doctrine without abiding by its real or supposed consequences (*e.g.* the belief in *creatio ex nihilo* without keeping the Sabbath) is of no value. And the question about certain doctrines is not whether they possess or do not possess the desired charm against certain diseases of the soul, but whether they ought to be considered as characteristics of Judaism or not.

It must again be premised that the subject, which occupied the thoughts of the greatest and noblest Jewish minds for so many centuries, has been neglected for a comparatively long time. And this for various reasons. First, there is Mendelssohn's assertion, or supposed assertion, in his *Ferusalem*, that Judaism has no dogmas — an assertion which has been accepted by the majority of modern Jewish theologians as the only dogma Judaism possesses. You can hear it pronounced in scores of Jewish pulpits; you can read it written in scores of Jewish books. To admit the possibility that Mendelssohn was in error was hardly permissible, especially for those with

whom he enjoys a certain infallibility. Nay, even the fact that he himself was not consistent in his theory, and on another occasion declared that Judaism *has* dogmas, only that they are purer and more in harmony with reason than those of other religions; or even the more important fact that he published a school-book for children, in which the so-called Thirteen Articles were embodied, only that instead of the formula "I believe," he substituted "I am convinced,"—even such patent facts did not produce much effect upon many of our modern theologians.¹ They were either overlooked or explained away so as to make them harmonise with the great dogma of dogmalessness. For it is one of the attributes of infallibility that the words of its happy possessor must always be reconcilable even when they appear to the eye of the unbeliever as gross contradictions.

Another cause of the neglect into which the subject has fallen is that our century is an *historical* one. It is not only books that have their fate, but also whole sciences and literatures. In past times it was religious speculation that formed the favourite study of scholars, in our time it is history with its critical foundation on a sound philology. Now as these two most important branches of Jewish science were so long neglected—were perhaps never cultivated in the true meaning of the word, and as Jewish literature is so vast and Jewish history so far-reaching and eventful, we cannot wonder that these studies have absorbed the time and the labour of the greatest and best Jewish writers in this century.

There is, besides, a certain tendency in historical studies that is hostile to mere theological speculation. The historian deals with realities, the theologian with abstrac-

tions. The latter likes to shape the universe after his system, and tells us how things *ought to be*, the former teaches us how they *are* or *have been*, and the explanation he gives for their being so and not otherwise includes in most cases also a kind of justification for their existence. There is also the *odium theologicum*, which has been the cause of so much misfortune that it is hated by the historian, whilst the superficial, rationalistic way in which the theologian manages to explain everything which does not suit his system is most repulsive to the critical spirit.

But it cannot be denied that this neglect has caused much confusion. Especially is this noticeable in England, which is essentially a theological country, and where people are but little prone to give up speculation about things which concern their most sacred interest and greatest happiness. Thus whilst we are exceedingly poor in all other branches of Jewish learning, we are comparatively rich in productions of a theological character. We have a superfluity of essays on such delicate subjects as eternal punishment, immortality of the soul, the day of judgment, etc., and many treatises on the definition of Judaism. But knowing little or nothing of the progress recently made in Jewish theology, of the many protests against all kinds of infallibility, whether canonised in this century or in olden times, we in England still maintain that Judaism has no dogmas as if nothing to the contrary had ever been said. We seek the foundation of Judaism in political economy, in hygiene, in everything except religion. Following the fashion of the day to esteem religion in proportion to its ability to adapt itself to every possible and impossible metaphysical and social system, we are

anxious to squeeze out of Judaism the last drop of faith and hope, and strive to make it so flexible that we can turn it in every direction which it is our pleasure to follow. But alas! the flexibility has progressed so far as to classify Judaism among the invertebrate species, the lowest order of living things. It strongly resembles a certain Christian school which addresses itself to the world in general and claims to satisfy everybody alike. It claims to be socialism for the adherents of Karl Marx and Lassalle, worship of man for the followers of Comte and St. Simon; it carefully avoids the word "God" for the comfort of agnostics and sceptics, whilst on the other hand it pretends to hold sway over paradise, hell, and immortality for the edification of believers. In such illusions many of our theologians delight. For illusions they are; you cannot be everything if you want to be anything. Moreover, illusions in themselves are bad enough, but we are menaced with what is still worse. Judaism, divested of every higher religious motive, is in danger of falling into gross materialism. For what else is the meaning of such declarations as "Believe what you like, but conform to this or that mode of life"; what else does it mean but "We cannot expect you to believe that the things you are bidden to do are commanded by a higher authority; there is not such a thing as belief, but you ought to do them for conventionalism or for your own convenience."

But both these motives—the good opinion of our neighbours, as well as our bodily health—have nothing to do with our nobler and higher sentiments, and degrade Judaism to a matter of expediency or diplomacy. Indeed, things have advanced so far that well-meaning but ill-advised writers even think to render a service to Judaism

by declaring it to be a kind of enlightened Hedonism, or rather a moderate Epicureanism.

I have no intention of here answering the question, What is Judaism? This question is not less perplexing than the problem, What is God's world? Judaism is also a great Infinite, composed of as many endless Units, the Jews. And these Unit-Jews have been, and are still, scattered through all the world, and have passed under an immensity of influences, good and bad. If so, how can we give an exact definition of the Infinite, called Judaism?

But if there is anything sure, it is that the highest motives which worked through the history of Judaism are the strong belief in God and the unshaken confidence that at last this God, the God of Israel, will be the God of the whole world; or, in other words, Faith and Hope are the two most prominent characteristics of Judaism.

In the following pages I shall try to give a short account of the manner in which these two principles of Judaism found expression, from the earliest times down to the age of Mendelssohn; that is, to present an outline of the history of Jewish Dogmas. First, a few observations on the position of the Bible and the Talmud in relation to our theme. Insufficient and poor as they may be in proportion to the importance of these two fundamental documents of Judaism, these remarks may nevertheless suggest a connecting link between the teachings of Jewish antiquity and those of Maimonides and his successors.

I begin with the Scriptures.

The Bible itself hardly contains a command bidding us *to believe*. We are hardly ordered, *e.g.*, to believe in the existence of God. I say hardly, but I do not altogether deny the existence of such a command. It is true that we

do not find in the Scripture such words as: "You are commanded to believe in the existence of God." Nor is any punishment assigned as awaiting him who denies it. Notwithstanding these facts, many Jewish authorities — among them such important men as Maimonides, R. Judah Hallevi, Nachmanides — perceive, in the first words of the Ten Commandments, "I am the Lord thy God," the command to believe in His existence.²

Be this as it may, there cannot be the shadow of a doubt that the Bible, in which every command is dictated by God, and in which all its heroes are the servants, the friends, or the ambassadors of God, presumes such a belief in every one to whom those laws are dictated, and these heroes address themselves. Nay, I think that the word "belief" is not even adequate. In a world with so many visible facts and invisible causes, as life and death, growth and decay, light and darkness; in a world where the sun rises and sets; where the stars appear regularly; where heavy rains pour down from the sky, often accompanied by such grand phenomena as thunder and lightning; in a world full of such marvels, but into which no notion has entered of all our modern true or false explanations — who but God is behind all these things? "Have the gates," asks God, "have the gates of death been open to thee? or hast thou seen the doors of the shadow of death? . . . Where is the way where light dwelleth? and as for darkness, where is the place thereof? . . . Hath the rain a father? or who hath begotten the drops of dew? . . . Canst thou bind the sweet influences of Pleiades, or loose the bands of Orion? . . . Canst thou send lightnings, that they may go, and say unto thee, Here we are?" (Job xxxviii.). Of all these wonders, God

was not merely the *prima causa*; they were the result of His direct action, without any intermediary causes. And it is as absurd to say that the ancient world believed in God, as for a future historian to assert of the nineteenth century that it believed in the effects of electricity. We *see* them, and so antiquity *saw* God. If there was any danger, it lay not in the denial of the existence of a God, but in having a wrong belief. Belief in as many gods as there are manifestations in nature, the investing of them with false attributes, the misunderstanding of God's relation to men, lead to immorality. Thus the greater part of the laws and teachings of the Bible are either directed against polytheism, with all its low ideas of God, or rather of gods; or they are directed towards regulating God's relation to men. Man is a servant of God, or His prophet, or even His friend. But this relationship man obtains only by his conduct. Nay, all man's actions are carefully regulated by God, and connected with His holiness. The 19th chapter of Leviticus, which is considered by the Rabbis as the portion of the Law in which the most important articles of the Torah are embodied, is headed, "Ye shall be holy, for I the Lord your own God am holy." And each law therein occurring, even those which concern our relations to each other, is *not* founded on utilitarian reasons, but is ordained because the opposite of it is an offence to the holiness of God, and profanes His creatures, whom He desired to be as holy as He is.⁸

Thus the whole structure of the Bible is built upon the visible fact of the existence of a God, and upon the belief in the relation of God to men, especially to Israel. In spite of all that has been said to the contrary, the Bible *does* lay stress upon belief, where belief is required. The

unbelievers are rebuked again and again. "For all this they sinned still, and believed not for His wondrous work," complains Asaph (Ps. lxxviii. 32). And belief is praised in such exalted words as, "Thus saith the Lord, I remember thee, the kindness of thy youth, the love of thine espousals, when thou wentest after me in the wilderness, in a land that was not sown" (Jer. ii. 2). The Bible, especially the books of the prophets, consists, in great part, of promises for the future, which the Rabbis justly termed the "Consolations."⁴ For our purpose, it is of no great consequence to examine what future the prophets had in view, whether an immediate future or one more remote, at the end of days. At any rate, they inculcated hope and confidence that God would bring to pass a better time. I think that even the most advanced Bible critic—provided he is not guided by some modern Aryan reasons—must perceive in such passages as, "The Lord shall reign for ever and ever," "The Lord shall rejoice in his works," and many others, a hope for more than the establishment of the "national Deity among his votaries in Palestine."

We have now to pass over an interval of many centuries, the length of which depends upon the views held as to the date of the close of the canon, and examine what the Rabbis, the representatives of the prophets, thought on this subject. Not that the views of the author of the *Wisdom of Solomon*, of Philo and Aristobulus, and many others of the Judæo-Alexandrian school would be uninteresting for us. But somehow their influence on Judaism was only a passing one, and their doctrines never became authoritative in the Synagogue. We must here confine ourselves to those who, even by the

testimony of their bitterest enemies, occupied the seat of Moses.

The successors of the prophets had to deal with new circumstances, and accordingly their teachings were adapted to the wants of their times. As the result of manifold foreign influences, the visible fact of the existence of God as manifested in the Bible had been somewhat obscured. Prophecy ceased, and the Holy Spirit which inspired a few chosen ones took its place. Afterwards this influence was reduced to the hearing of a Voice from Heaven, which was audible to still fewer. On the other hand the Rabbis had this advantage that they were not called upon to fight against idolatry as their predecessors the prophets had been. The evil inclination to worship idols was, as the Talmud expresses it allegorically, killed by the Men of the Great Synagogue, or, as we should put it, it was suppressed by the sufferings of the captivity in Babylon. This change of circumstances is marked by the following fact:—Whilst the prophets mostly considered idolatry as the cause of all sin, the Rabbis show a strong tendency to ascribe sin to a defect in, or a want of, belief on the part of the sinner. They teach that Adam would not have sinned unless he had first denied the "Root of all" (or the main principle), namely, the belief in the Omnipresence of God. Of Cain they say that before murdering his brother he declared: "There is no judgment, there is no judge, there is no world to come, and there is no reward for the just, and no punishment for the wicked."⁵

In another place we read that the commission of a sin in secret is an impertinent attempt by the doer to oust God from the world. But if unbelief is considered as

the root of all evil, we may expect that the reverse of it, a perfect faith, would be praised in the most exalted terms. So we read: Faith is so great that the man who possesses it may hope to become a worthy vessel of the Holy Spirit, or, as we should express it, that he may hope to obtain by this power the highest degree of communion with his Maker. The Patriarch Abraham, notwithstanding all his other virtues, only became "the possessor of both worlds" by the merit of his strong faith. Nay, even the fulfilment of a single law when accompanied by true faith is, according to the Rabbis, sufficient to bring man nigh to God. And the future redemption is also conditional on the degree of faith shown by Israel.⁶

It has often been asked what the Rabbis would have thought of a man who fulfils every commandment of the Torah, but does not believe that this Torah was given by God, or that there exists a God at all. It is indeed very difficult to answer this question with any degree of certainty. In the time of the Rabbis people were still too simple for such a diplomatic religion, and conformity in the modern sense was quite an unknown thing. But from the foregoing remarks it would seem that the Rabbis could not conceive such a monstrosity as atheistic orthodoxy. For, as we have seen, the Rabbis thought that unbelief must needs end in sin, for faith is the origin of all good. Accordingly, in the case just supposed they would have either suspected the man's orthodoxy, or would have denied that his views were really what he professed them to be.

Still more important than the above cited Agadic passages is one which we are about to quote from the tractate Sanhedrin. This tractate deals with the constitution,

of the supreme law-court, the examination of the witnesses, the functions of the judges, and the different punishment to be inflicted on the transgressors of the law. After having enumerated various kinds of capital punishment, the Mishnah adds the following words: "These are (the men) who are excluded from the life to come: He who says there is no resurrection from death; he who says there is no Torah given from heaven, and the Epikurus."⁷ This passage was considered by the Rabbis of the Middle Ages, as well as by modern scholars, the *locus classicus* for the dogma question. There are many passages in the Rabbinic literature which exclude man from the world to come for this or that sin. But these are more or less of an Agadic (legendary) character, and thus lend themselves to exaggeration and hyperbolic language. They cannot, therefore, be considered as serious legal dicta, or as the general opinion of the Rabbis.

The Mishnah in Sanhedrin, however, has, if only by its position in a legal tractate, a certain *Halachic* (obligatory) character. And the fact that so early an authority as R. Akiba made additions to it guarantees its high antiquity. The first two sentences of this Mishnah are clear enough. In modern language, and positively speaking, they would represent articles of belief in Resurrection and Revelation. Great difficulty is found in defining what was meant by the word *Epikurus*. The authorities of the Middle Ages, to whom I shall again have to refer, explain the Epikurus to be a man who denies the belief in reward and punishment; others identify him with one who denies the belief in Providence; while others again consider the Epikurus to be one who denies Tradition. But the paral-

lel passages in which it occurs incline one rather to think that this word cannot be defined by one kind of heresy. It implies rather a frivolous treatment of the words of Scripture or of Tradition. In the case of the latter (Tradition) it is certainly not honest difference of opinion that is condemned; for the Rabbis themselves differed very often from each other, and even Mediæval authorities did not feel any compunction about explaining Scripture in variance with the Rabbinic interpretation, and sometimes they even went so far as to declare that the view of this or that great authority was only to be considered as an isolated opinion not deserving particular attention. What they did blame was, as already said, scoffing and impiety. We may thus safely assert that reverence for the teachers of Israel formed the third essential principle of Judaism.⁸

I have still to remark that there occur in the Talmud such passages as "the Jew, even if he has sinned, is still a Jew," or "He who denies idolatry is called a Jew." These and similar passages have been used to prove that Judaism was not a positive religion, but only involved the negation of idolatry. But it has been overlooked that the statements quoted have more a legal than a theological character. The Jew belonged to his nationality even after having committed the greatest sin, just as the Englishman does not cease to be an Englishman—in regard to treason and the like—by having committed a heinous crime. But he has certainly acted in a very un-English way, and having outraged the feelings of the whole nation will have to suffer for his misconduct. The Rabbis in a similar manner did not maintain that he who gave up the belief in Revelation and Resurrection, and treated irreverently the teach-

ers of Israel, severed his connection with the Jewish nation, but that, for his crime, he was going to suffer the heaviest punishment. He was to be excluded from the world to come.

Still, important as is the passage quoted from Sanhedrin, it would be erroneous to think that it exhausted the creed of the Rabbis. The liturgy and innumerable passages in the Midrashim show that they ardently clung to the belief in the advent of the Messiah. All their hope was turned to the future redemption and the final establishment of the Kingdom of Heaven on earth. Judaism, stripped of this belief, would have been for them devoid of meaning. The belief in reward and punishment is also repeated again and again in the old Rabbinic literature. A more emphatic declaration of the belief in Providence than is conveyed by the following passages is hardly conceivable. "Everything is foreseen, and free will is given. And the world is judged by grace." Or, "the born are to die, and the dead to revive, and the living to be judged. For to know and to notify, and that it may be known that He (God) is the Framer and He the Creator, and He the Discerner, and He the Judge, and He the Witness," etc.⁹

But it must not be forgotten that it was not the habit of the Rabbis to lay down, either for conduct or for doctrine, rules which were commonly known. When they urged the three points stated above there must have been some historical reason for it. Probably these principles were controverted by some heretics. Indeed, the whole tone of the passage cited from Sanhedrin is a protest against certain unbelievers who are threatened with punishment. Other beliefs, not less essential, but less disputed, remain

unmentioned, because there was no necessity to assert them.

It was not till a much later time, when the Jews came into closer contact with new philosophical schools, and also new creeds which were more liable than heathenism was to be confused with Judaism, that this necessity was felt. And thus we are led at once to the period when the Jews became acquainted with the teachings of the Moham-medan schools. The Caraites came very early into contact with non-Jewish systems. And so we find that they were also the first to formulate Jewish dogmas in a fixed number, and in a systematic order. It is also possible that their separation from the Tradition, and their early division into little sects among themselves, compelled them to take this step, in order to avoid further sectarianism.

The number of their dogmas amounts to ten. According to Judah Hadasi (1150), who would appear to have derived them from his predecessors, their dogmas include the following articles:—1. *Creatio ex nihilo*; 2. The existence of a Creator, God; 3. This God is an absolute unity as well as incorporeal; 4. Moses and the other prophets were sent by God; 5. God has given to us the Torah, which is true and complete in every respect, not wanting the addition of the so-called Oral Law; 6. The Torah must be studied by every Jew in the original (Hebrew) language; 7. The Holy Temple was a place elected by God for His manifestation; 8. Resurrection of the dead; 9. Punishment and reward after death; 10. The Coming of the Messiah, the son of David.

How far the predecessors of Hadasi were influenced by a certain Joseph Albashir (about 950), of whom there exists a manuscript work, "Rudiments of Faith," I am unable to

say. The little we know of him reveals more of his intimacy with Arabic thoughts than of his importance for his sect in particular and for Judaism in general. After Hadasi I shall mention here Elijah Bashazi, a Caraitic writer of the end of the fifteenth century. This author, who was much influenced by Maimonides, omits the second and the seventh articles. In order to make up the ten he numbers the belief in the eternity of God as an article, and divides the fourth article into two. In the fifth article Bashazi does not emphasise so strongly the completeness of the Torah as Hadasi, and omits the portion which is directed against Tradition. It is interesting to see the distinction which Bashazi draws between the Pentateuch and the Prophets. While he thinks that the five books of Moses can never be altered, he regards the words of the Prophets as only relating to their contemporaries, and thus subject to changes. As I do not want to anticipate Maimonides' system, I must refrain from giving here the articles laid down by Solomon Troki in the beginning of the eighteenth century. For the articles of Maimonides are copied by this writer with a few slight alterations so as to dress them in a Caraitic garb.

I must dismiss the Caraites with these few remarks, my object being chiefly to discuss the dogmas of the Synagogue from which they had separated themselves. Besides, as in everything Caraitic, there is no further development of the question. As Bashazi laid them down, they are still taught by the Caraites of to-day. I return to the Rabbanites.¹⁰

As is well known, Maimonides (1130-1205), was the first Rabbanite who formulated the dogmas of the Synagogue. But there are indications of earlier attempts. R. Saadiah

Gaon's (892-942) work, *Creeds and Opinions*, shows such traces. He says in his preface, "My heart sickens to see that the belief of my co-religionists is impure and that their theological views are confused." The subjects he treats in this book, such as creation, unity of God, resurrection of the dead, the future redemption of Israel, reward and punishment, and other kindred theological subjects might thus, perhaps, be considered as the essentials of the creed that the Gaon desired to present in a pure and rational form. R. Hannaneel, of Kairowan,¹¹ in the first half of the eleventh century, says in one of his commentaries that to deserve eternal life one must believe in *four* things: in God, in the prophets, in a future world where the just will be rewarded, and in the advent of the Redeemer. From R. Judah Hallelevi's *Cusari*, written in the beginning of the twelfth century, we might argue that the belief in the election of Israel by God was the cardinal dogma of the author.¹² Abraham Ibn Daud, a contemporary of Maimonides, in his book *The High Belief*,¹³ speaks of *rudiments*, among which, besides such metaphysical principles as unity, rational conception of God's attributes, etc., the belief in the immutability of the Law, etc., is included. Still, all these works are intended to furnish evidence from philosophy or history for the truth of religion rather than to give a definition of this truth. The latter task was undertaken by Maimonides.

I refer to the thirteen articles embodied in his first work, *The Commentary to the Mishnah*. They are appended to the Mishnah in Sanhedrin, with which I dealt above. But though they do not form an independent treatise, Maimonides' remarks must not be considered as merely incidental.

That Maimonides was quite conscious of the importance of this exposition can be gathered from the concluding words addressed to the reader: "Know these (words) and repeat them many times, and think them over in the proper way. God knows that thou wouldst be deceiving thyself if thou thinkest thou hast understood them by having read them once or even ten times. Be not, therefore, hasty in perusing them. I have not composed them without deep study and earnest reflection."

The result of this deep study was that the following Thirteen Articles constitute the creed of Judaism. They are:—

1. The belief in the existence of a Creator;
2. The belief in His Unity;
3. The belief in His Incorporeality;
4. The belief in His Eternity;
5. The belief that all worship and adoration are due to Him alone;
6. The belief in Prophecy;
7. The belief that Moses was the greatest of all Prophets, both before and after him;
8. The belief that the Torah was revealed to Moses on Mount Sinai;
9. The belief in the Immutability of this revealed Torah;
10. The belief that God knows the actions of men;
11. The belief in Reward and Punishment;
12. The belief in the coming of the Messiah;
13. The belief in the Resurrection of the dead.

The impulse given by the great philosopher and still greater Jew was eagerly followed by succeeding generations, and Judaism thus came into possession of a dogmatic literature such as it never knew before Maimonides. Maimonides is the centre of this literature, and I shall accordingly speak in the remainder of this essay of Maimonists and Anti-Maimonists. These terms really apply to the great controversy that raged round Maimonides' *Guide of*

the Perplexed, but I shall, chiefly for brevity's sake, employ them in these pages in a restricted sense to refer to the dispute concerning the Thirteen Articles.

Among the Maimonists we may probably include the great majority of Jews, who accepted the Thirteen Articles without further question. Maimonides must indeed have filled up a great gap in Jewish theology, a gap, moreover, the existence of which was very generally perceived. A century had hardly elapsed before the Thirteen Articles had become a theme for the poets of the Synagogue. And almost every country where Jews lived can show a poem or a prayer founded on these Articles. R. Jacob Molin (1420) of Germany speaks of metrical and rhymed songs in the German language, the burden of which was the Thirteen Articles, and which were read by the common people with great devotion. The numerous commentaries and homilies written on the same topic would form a small library in themselves.¹⁴ But on the other hand it must not be denied that the Anti-Maimonists, that is to say those Jewish writers who did not agree with the creed formulated by Maimonides, or agreed only in part with him, form also a very strong and respectable minority. They deserve our attention the more as it is their works which brought life into the subject and deepened it. It is not by a perpetual Amen to every utterance of a great authority that truth or literature gains anything.

The Anti-Maimonists can be divided into two classes. The one class categorically denies that Judaism has dogmas. I shall have occasion to touch on this view when I come to speak of Abarbanel. Here I pass at once to the second class of Anti-Maimonists. This consists of those who agree with Maimonides as to the existence of dogmas

in Judiasm, but who differ from him as to what these dogmas are, or who give a different enumeration of them.

As the first of these Anti-Maimonists we may regard Nachmanides, who, in his famous *Sermon in the Presence of the King*, speaks of three fundamental principles: Creation (that is, non-eternity of matter), Omniscience of God, and Providence. Next comes R. Abba Mari ben Moses, of Montpellier. He wrote at the beginning of the fourteenth century, and is famous in Jewish history for his zeal against the study of philosophy. We possess a small pamphlet by him dealing with our subject, and it forms a kind of prologue to his collection of controversial letters against the rationalists of his time.¹⁵ He lays down three articles as the fundamental teachings of Religion: 1. Metaphysical: The existence of God, including His Unity and Incorporeality; 2. Mosaic: *Creatio ex nihilo* by God—a consequence of this principle is the belief that God is capable of altering the laws of nature at His pleasure; 3. Ethical: Special Providence—*i.e.* God knows all our actions in all their details. Abba Mari does not mention Maimonides' Thirteen Articles. But it would be false to conclude that he rejected the belief in the coming of the Messiah, or any other article of Maimonides. The whole tone and tendency of this pamphlet is polemical, and it is therefore probable that he only urged those points which were either doubted or explained in an unorthodox way by the sceptics of his time.

Another scholar, of Provence, who wrote but twenty years later than Abba Mari—R. David ben Samuel d'Estella (1320)—speaks of the seven pillars of religion. They are: Revelation, Providence, Reward and Punish-

ment, the Coming of the Messiah, Resurrection of the Dead, *Creatio ex nihilo*, and Free Will.¹⁶

Of authors living in other countries, I have to mention here R. Shemariah, of Crete, who flourished at about the same time as R. David d'Estella, and is known from his efforts to reconcile the Caraites with the Rabbanites. This author wrote a book for the purpose of furnishing Jewish students with evidence for what he considered the five fundamental teachings of Judaism, viz.: 1. The Existence of God; 2. The Incorporeality of God; 3. His Absolute Unity; 4. That God created heaven and earth; 5. That God created the world after His will 5106 years ago — 5106 (1346 A.C.), being the year in which Shemariah wrote these words.¹⁷

In Portugal, at about the same time, we find R. David ben Yom-Tob Bilia adding to the articles of Maimonides thirteen of his own, which he calls the "Fundamentals of the Thinking Man." Five of these articles relate to the functions of the human soul, that, according to him, emanated from God, and to the way in which this divine soul receives its punishment and reward. The other eight articles are as follows: 1. The belief in the existence of spiritual beings — angels; 2. *Creatio ex nihilo*; 3. The belief in the existence of another world, and that this other world is only a spiritual one; 4. The Torah is above philosophy; 5. The Torah has an outward (literal) meaning and an inward (allegorical) meaning; 6. The text of the Torah is not subject to any emendation; 7. The reward of a good action is the good work itself, and the doer must not expect any other reward; 8. It is only by the "commands relating to the heart," for instance, the belief in one eternal God, the loving and fearing Him, and

not through good actions, that man attains the highest degree of perfection.¹⁸ Perhaps it would be suitable to mention here another contemporaneous writer, who also enumerates twenty-six articles. The name of this writer is unknown, and his articles are only gathered from quotations by later authors. It would seem from these quotations that the articles of this unknown author consisted mostly of statements emphasising the belief in the attributes of God: as, His Eternity, His Wisdom and Omnipotence, and the like.¹⁹

More important for our subject are the productions of the fifteenth century, especially those of Spanish authors. The fifteen articles of R. Lipman Muhlhausen, in the preface to his well-known *Book of Victory*²⁰ (1410), differ but slightly from those of Maimonides. In accordance with the anti-Christian tendency of his polemical book, he lays more stress on the two articles of Unity and Incorporeality, and makes of them four. We can therefore dismiss him with this short remark, and pass at once to the Spanish Rabbis.

The first of these is R. Chasdai Ibn Crescas, who composed his famous treatise, *The Light of God*, about 1405. Chasdai's book is well known for its attacks on Aristotle, and also for its influence on Spinoza. But Chasdai deals also with Maimonides' Thirteen Articles, to which he was very strongly opposed. Already in his preface he attacks Maimonides for speaking, in his *Book of the Commandments*, of the belief in the existence of God as an "affirmative precept." Chasdai thinks it absurd; for every commandment must be dictated by some authority, but on whose authority can we dictate the acceptance of this authority? His general objection to the Thirteen Articles

is that Maimonides confounded dogmas or *fundamental beliefs* of Judaism, without which Judaism is inconceivable, with beliefs or *doctrines* which Judaism inculcates, but the denial of which, though involving a strong heresy, does not make Judaism impossible. He maintains that if Maimonides meant only to count fundamental teachings, there are not more than seven; but that if he intended also to include doctrines, he ought to have enumerated sixteen. As beliefs of the first class — namely, fundamental beliefs — he considers the following articles: 1. God's knowledge of our actions; 2. Providence; 3. God's omnipotence — even to act against the laws of nature; 4. Prophecy; 5. Free will; 6. The aim of the Torah is to make man long after the closest communion with God. The belief in the existence of God, Chasdai thinks, is an axiom with which every religion must begin, and he is therefore uncertain whether to include it as a dogma or not. As to the doctrines which every Jew is bound to believe, but without which Judaism is not impossible, Chasdai divides them into two sections: (a) 1. *Creatio ex nihilo*; 2. Immortality of the soul; 3. Reward and Punishment; 4. Resurrection of the dead; 5. Immutability of the Torah; 6. Superiority of the prophecy of Moses; 7. That the High Priest received from God the instructions sought for, when he put his questions through the medium of the Urim and Thummim; 8. The coming of the Messiah. (b) Doctrines which are expressed by certain religious ceremonies, and on belief in which these ceremonies are conditioned: 1. The belief in the efficacy of prayer — as well as in the power of the benediction of the priests to convey to us the blessing of God; 2. God is merciful to the penitent; 3. Certain days in the year — for instance,

the Day of Atonement — are especially qualified to bring us near to God, if we keep them in the way we are commanded. That Chasdai is a little arbitrary in the choice of his "doctrines," I need hardly say. Indeed, Chasdai's importance for the dogma-question consists more in his critical suggestions than in his positive results. He was, as we have seen, the first to make the distinction between fundamental teachings which form the basis of Judaism, and those other simple Jewish doctrines without which Judaism is not impossible. Very daring is his remark, when proving that Reward and Punishment, Immortality of the soul, and Resurrection of the dead must not be considered as the basis of Judaism, since the highest ideal of religion is to serve God without any hope of reward. Even more daring are his words concerning the Immutability of the Law. He says: "Some have argued that, since God is perfection, so must also His law be perfect, and thus unsusceptible of improvement." But he does not think this argument conclusive, though the fact in itself (the Immutability of the Law) is true. For one might answer that this perfection of the Torah could only be in accordance with the intelligence of those for whom it was meant; but as soon as the recipients of the Torah have advanced to a higher state of perfection, the Torah must also be altered to suit their advanced intelligence. A pupil of Chasdai illustrates the words of his master by a medical parallel. The physician has to adapt his medications to the various stages through which his patient has to pass. That he changes his prescription does not, however, imply that his medical knowledge is imperfect, or that his earlier remedies were ignorantly chosen; the varying condition of the invalid was the cause of the variation

in the doctor's treatment. Similarly, were not the Immutability of the Torah a "doctrine," one might maintain that the perfection of the Torah would not be inconsistent with the assumption that it was susceptible of modification, in accordance with our changing and progressive circumstances. But all these arguments are purely of a theoretic character; for, practically, every Jew, according to Chasdai, has to accept all these beliefs, whether he terms them fundamental teachings or only Jewish doctrines.²¹

Some years later, though he finished his work in the same year as Chasdai, R. Simeon Duran (1366-1444,) a younger contemporary of the former, made his researches on dogmas. His studies on this subject form a kind of introduction to his commentary on Job, which he finished in the year 1405. Duran is not so strongly opposed to the Thirteen Articles as Chasdai, or as another "thinker of our people," who thought them an arbitrary imitation of the thirteen attributes of God. Duran tries to justify Maimonides; but nevertheless he agrees with "earlier authorities," who formulated the Jewish creed in Three Articles — The Existence of God, Revelation, and Reward and Punishment — under which Duran thinks the Thirteen Articles of Maimonides may be easily classed. Most interesting are his remarks concerning the validity of dogmas. He tells us that only those are to be considered as heretics who abide by their own opinions, though they know that they are contradictory to the views of the Torah. Those who accept the fundamental teachings of Judaism, but are led by their deep studies and earnest reflection to differ in details from the opinions current among their co-religionists, and explain certain passages

in the Scripture in their own way, must by no means be considered as heretics. We must, therefore, Duran proceeds to say, not blame such men as Maimonides, who gave an allegorical interpretation to certain passages in the Bible about miracles, or R. Levi ben Gershom, who followed certain un-Jewish views in relation to the belief in *Creatio ex nihilo*. Only the views are condemnable, not those who cherish them. God forbid, says Duran, that such a thing should happen in Israel as to condemn honest inquirers on account of their differing opinions. It would be interesting to know of how many divines as tolerant as this persecuted Jew the fifteenth century can boast.²²

We can now pass to a more popular but less original writer on our theme. I refer to R. Joseph Albo, the author of the *Roots*,²³ who was the pupil of Chasdai, a younger contemporary of Duran, and wrote at a much later period than these authors. Graetz has justly denied him much originality. The chief merit of Albo consists in popularising other people's thoughts, though he does not always take care to mention their names. And the student who is a little familiar with the contents of the *Roots* will easily find that Albo has taken his best ideas either from Chasdai or from Duran. As it is of little consequence to us whether an article of faith is called "stem," or "root," or "branch," there is scarcely anything fresh left to quote in the name of Albo. The late Dr. Löw, of Szegedin, was indeed right, when he answered an adversary who challenged him — "Who would dare to declare me a heretic as long as I confess the Three Articles laid down by Albo?" with the words "Albo himself." For, after all the subtle distinctions Albo makes between

different classes of dogmas, he declares that every one who denies even the immutability of the Law or the coming of the Messiah, which are, according to him, articles of minor importance, is a heretic who will be excluded from the world to come. But there is one point in his book which is worth noticing. It was suggested to him by Maimonides, indeed; still Albo has the merit of having emphasised it as it deserves. Among the articles which he calls "branches" Albo counts the belief that the perfection of man, which leads to eternal life, can be obtained by the fulfilling of *one* commandment. But this command must, as Maimonides points out, be done without any worldly regard, and only for the love of God. When one considers how many platitudes are repeated year by year by certain theologians on the subject of Jewish legalism, we cannot lay enough stress on this article of Albo, and we ought to make it better known than it has hitherto been.²⁴

Though I cannot enter here into the enumeration of the Maimonists, I must not leave unmentioned the name of R. Nissim ben Moses of Marseilles, the first great Maimonist, who flourished about the end of the thirteenth century, and was considered as one of the most enlightened thinkers of his age.²⁵ Another great Maimonist deserving special attention is R. Abraham ben Shem-Tob Bibago, who may perhaps be regarded as the most prominent among those who undertook to defend Maimonides against the attacks of Chasdai and others. Bibago wrote *The Path of Belief*²⁶ in the second half of the fifteenth century, and was, as Dr. Steinschneider aptly describes him, a *Denkgläubiger*. But, above all, he was a believing Jew. When he was once asked, at the table of King

John II., of Aragon, by a Christian scholar, "Are you the Jewish philosopher?" he answered, "I am a Jew who believes in the Law given to us by our teacher Moses, though I have studied philosophy." Bibago was such a devoted admirer of Maimonides that he could not tolerate any opposition to him. He speaks in one passage of the prudent people of his time who, in desiring to be looked upon as orthodox by the great mob, calumniated the Teacher (Maimonides), and depreciated his merits. Bibago's book is very interesting, especially in its controversial parts; but in respect to dogmas he is, as already said, a Maimonist, and does not contribute any new point on our subject.

To return to the Anti-Maimonists of the second half of the fifteenth century. As such may be considered R. Isaac Aramah, who speaks of three foundations of religion: *Creatio ex nihilo*, Revelation (?), and the belief in a world to come.²⁷ Next to be mentioned is R. Joseph Jabez, who also accepts only three articles: *Creatio ex nihilo*, Individual Providence, and the Unity of God.²⁸ Under these three heads he tries to classify the Thirteen Articles of Maimonides.

The last Spanish writer on our subject is R. Isaac Abarbanel. His treatise on the subject is known under the title *Top of Amanah*,²⁹ and was finished in the year 1495. The greatest part of this treatise forms a defence of Maimonides, many points in which are taken from Bibago. But, in spite of this fact, Abarbanel must not be considered a Maimonist. It is only a feeling of piety towards Maimonides, or perhaps rather a fondness for argument, that made him defend Maimonides against Chasdai and others. His own view is that it is a mistake

to formulate dogmas of Judaism, since every word in the Torah has to be considered as a dogma for itself. It was only, says Abarbanel, by following the example of non-Jewish scholars that Maimonides and others were induced to lay down dogmas. The non-Jewish philosophers are in the habit of accepting in every science certain indisputable axioms from which they deduce the propositions which are less evident. The Jewish philosophers in a similar way sought for first principles in religion from which the whole of the Torah ought to be considered as a deduction. But, thinks Abarbanel, the Torah as a revealed code is under no necessity of deducing things from each other, for all the commands came from the same divine authority, and, therefore, all are alike evident, and have the same certainty. On this and similar grounds Abarbanel refused to accept dogmatic articles for Judaism, and he thus became the head of the school that forms a class by itself among the Anti-Maimonists to which many of the greatest Cabbalists also belong. But it is idle talk to cite this school in aid of the modern theory that Judaism has no dogmas. As we have seen, it was rather an *embarras de richesse* that prevented Abarbanel from accepting the Thirteen Articles of Maimonides. To him and to the Cabbalists the Torah consists of at least 613 Articles.

Abarbanel wrote his book with which we have just dealt, at Naples. And it is Italy to which, after the expulsion of the Jews from Spain, we have to look chiefly for religious speculation. But the philosophers of Italy are still less independent of Maimonides than their predecessors in Spain. Thus we find that R. David Messer Leon, R. David Vital, and others were Maimonists.

Even the otherwise refined and original thinker, R. Elijah Delmedigo (who died about the end of the fifteenth century) becomes almost impolite when he speaks of the adversaries of Maimonides in respect to dogmas. "It was only," he says, "the would-be philosopher that dared to question the articles of Maimonides. Our people have always the bad habit of thinking themselves competent to attack the greatest authorities as soon as they have got some knowledge of the subject. Genuine thinkers, however, attach very little importance to their objections."³⁰

Indeed, it seems as if the energetic protests of Delmedigo scared away the Anti-Maimonists for more than a century. Even in the following seventeenth century we have to notice only two Anti-Maimonists. The one is R. Tobijah, the Priest (1652), who was of Polish descent, studied in Italy, and lived as a medical man in France. He seems to refuse to accept the belief in the Immutability of the Torah, and in the coming of the Messiah, as fundamental teachings of Judaism.³¹ The other, at the end of the seventeenth century (1695), is R. Abraham Chayim Viterbo, of Italy. He accepts only six articles: 1. Existence of God; 2. Unity; 3. Incorporeality; 4. That God was revealed to Moses on Mount Sinai, and that the prophecy of Moses is true; 5. Revelation (including the historical parts of the Torah); 6. Reward and Punishment. As to the other articles of Maimonides, Viterbo, in opposition to other half-hearted Anti-Maimonists, declares that the man who denies them is *not* to be considered as a heretic; though he ought to believe them.³²

I have now arrived at the limit I set to myself at the beginning of this essay. For, between the times of

Viterbo and those of Mendelssohn, there is hardly to be found any serious opposition to Maimonides worth noticing here. Still I must mention the name of R. Saul Berlin (died 1794); there is much in his opinions on dogmas which will help us the better to understand the Thirteen Articles of Maimonides. As the reader has seen, I have refrained so far from reproducing here the apologies which were made by many Maimonists in behalf of the Thirteen Articles. For, after all their elaborate pleas, none of them was able to clear Maimonides of the charge of having confounded dogmas or fundamental teachings with doctrines. It is also true that the Fifth Article—that prayer and worship must only be offered to God—cannot be considered even as a doctrine, but as a simple precept. And there are other difficulties which all the distinctions of the Maimonists will never be able to solve. The only possible justification is, I think, that suggested by a remark of R. Saul. This author, who was himself—like his friend and older contemporary Mendelssohn—a strong Anti-Maimonist, among other remarks, maintains that dogmas must never be laid down but with regard to the necessities of the time.³³

Now R. Saul certainly did not doubt that Judaism is based on eternal truths which can in no way be shaken by new modes of thinking or changed circumstances. What he meant was that there are in every age certain beliefs which ought to be asserted more emphatically than others, without regard to their theological or rather logical importance. It is by this maxim that we shall be able to explain the articles of Maimonides. He asserted them, because they were necessary for his time.

We know, for instance, from a letter of his son and from other contemporaries, that it was just at his time that the belief in the incorporeality of God was, in the opinion of Maimonides, a little relaxed. Maimonides, who thought such low notions of the Deity dangerous to Judaism, therefore laid down an article against them. He tells us in his *Guide* that it was far from him to condemn any one who was not able to demonstrate the Incorporeality of God, but he stigmatised as a heretic one who refused to believe it. This position might be paralleled by that of a modern astronomer who, while considering it unreasonable to expect a mathematical demonstration of the movements of the earth from an ordinary unscientific man, would yet regard the person who refused to believe in such movements as an ignorant faddist.

Again, Maimonides undoubtedly knew that there may be found in the Talmud—that bottomless sea with its innumerable undercurrents—passages that are not quite in harmony with his articles; for instance, the well-known dictum of R. Hillel, who said, there is no Messiah for Israel—a passage which has already been quoted *ad nauseam* by every opponent of Maimonides from the earliest times down to the year of grace 1896. Maimonides was well aware of the existence of this and similar passages. But, being deeply convinced of the necessity of the belief in a future redemption of *Israel*—in opposition to other creeds which claim this redemption exclusively for their own adherents—Maimonides simply ignored the saying of R. Hillel, as an isolated opinion which contradicts all the consciousness and traditions of the Jew as expressed in thousands of other passages, and

especially in the liturgy. Most interesting is Maimonides' view about such isolated opinions in a letter to the wise men of Marseilles. He deals there with the question of free will and other theological subjects. After having stated his own view he goes on to say: "I know that it is possible to find in the Talmud or in the Midrash this or that saying in contradiction to the views you have heard from me. But you must not be troubled by them. One must not refuse to accept a doctrine, the truth of which has been proved, on account of its being in opposition to some isolated opinion held by this or that great authority. Is it not possible that he overlooked some important considerations when he uttered this strange opinion? It is also possible that his words must not be taken literally, and have to be explained in an allegorical way. We can also think that his words were only to be applied with regard to certain circumstances of his time, but never intended as permanent truths. . . . No man must surrender his private judgment. The eyes are not directed backwards but forwards." In another place Maimonides calls the suppression of one's own opinions — for the reason of their being irreconcilable with the isolated views of some great authority — a moral suicide.

By such motives Maimonides was guided when he left certain views hazarded in the Rabbinic literature unheeded, and followed what we may perhaps call the religious instinct, trusting to his own conscience. We may again be certain that Maimonides was clear-headed enough to see that the words of the Torah: "And there arose no prophet since in Israel like unto Moses" (Deut. xxxiv. 10), were as little intended to imply a doctrine as the passage relating to the king Josiah, "And like unto

him was there no king before him that turned to the Lord with all his heart . . . neither after him arose there any like him" (2 Kings xxiii. 25). And none would think of declaring the man a heretic who should believe another king to be as pious as Josiah. But living among followers of the "imitating creeds" (as he calls Christianity and Mohammedism), who claimed that their religion had superseded the law of Moses, Maimonides, consciously or unconsciously, felt himself compelled to assert the superiority of the prophecy of Moses. And so we may guess that every article of Maimonides which seems to offer difficulties to us contains an assertion of some relaxed belief, or a protest against the pretensions of other creeds, though we are not always able to discover the exact necessity for them. On the other hand, Maimonides did not assert the belief in free will, for which he argued so earnestly in his *Guide*. The common "man," with his simple unspeculative mind, for whom these Thirteen Articles were intended, "never dreamed that the will was not free," and there was no necessity of impressing on his mind things which he had never doubted.³⁴

So much about Maimonides. As to the Anti-Maimonists, it could hardly escape the reader that in some of the quoted systems the difference from the view of Maimonides is only a logical one, not a theological. Of some authors again, especially those of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, it is not at all certain whether they intended to oppose Maimonides. Others again, as for instance R. Abba Mari, R. Lipman, and R. Joseph Jabez, acted on the same principle as Maimonides, urging only those teachings of Judaism which they thought endangered. One could now, indeed, animated by the praiseworthy exam-

ple given to us by Maimonides, also propose some articles of faith which are suggested to us by the necessities of our own time. One might, for instance, insert the article, "I believe that Judaism is, in the first instance, a divine religion, *not* a mere complex of racial peculiarities and tribal customs." One might again propose an article to the effect that Judaism is a proselytising religion, having the mission to bring about God's kingdom on earth, and to include in that kingdom all mankind. One might also submit for consideration whether it would not be advisable to urge a little more the principle that religion means chiefly a *Weltanschauung* and worship of God by means of holiness both in thought and in action. One would even not object to accept the article laid down by R. Saul, that we have to look upon ourselves as sinners. Morbid as such a belief may be, it would, if properly impressed on our mind, have perhaps the wholesome effect of cooling down a little our self-importance and our mutual admiration that makes all progress among us almost impossible.

But it was not my purpose to ventilate here the question whether Maimonides' articles are sufficient for us, or whether we ought not to add new ones to them. Nor do I attempt to decide what system we ought to prefer for recitation in the Synagogue—that of Maimonides or that of Chasdai, or of any other writer. I do not think that such a recital is of much use. My object in this sketch has been rather to make the reader *think* about Judaism, by proving that it regulates not only our actions, but also our thoughts. We usually urge that in Judaism religion means life; but we forget that a life without guiding principles and thoughts is a life not worth living. At

least it was so considered by the greatest Jewish thinkers, and hence their efforts to formulate the creed of Judaism, so that men should not only be able to do the right thing, but also to think the right thing. Whether they succeeded in their attempts towards formulating the creed of Judaism or not will always remain a question. This concerns the logician more than the theologian. But surely Maimonides and his successors *did* succeed in having a religion depending directly on God, with the most ideal and lofty aspirations for the future; whilst the Judaism of a great part of our modern theologians reminds one very much of the words with which the author of *Marius the Epicurean* characterises the Roman religion in the days of her decline: a religion which had been always something to be done rather than something to be thought, or believed, or loved.

Political economy, hygiene, statistics, are very fine things. But no sane man would for them make those sacrifices which Judaism requires from us. It is only for God's sake, to fulfil His commands and to accomplish His purpose, that religion becomes worth living and dying for. And this can only be possible with a religion which possesses dogmas.

It is true that every great religion is "a concentration of many ideas and ideals," which make this religion able to adapt itself to various modes of thinking and living. But there must always be a point round which all these ideas concentrate themselves. This centre is Dogma.

VII

THE HISTORY OF JEWISH TRADITION

THERE is an anecdote about a famous theologian to the effect that he used to tell his pupils, "Should I ever grow old and weak—which usually drives people to embrace the safer side—and alter my opinions, then pray do not believe me." The concluding volume of Weiss's *History of Jewish Tradition*¹ shows that there was no need for our author to warn his pupils against the dangers accompanying old age. For though Weiss had, when he began to write this last volume, already exceeded his three-score and ten, and, as we read in the preface, had some misgivings as to whether he should continue his work, there is no trace in it of any abatement of the great powers of the author. It is marked by the same freshness in diction, the same marvellous scholarship, the same display of astonishing critical powers, and the same impartial and straightforward way of judging persons and things, for which the preceding volumes were so much distinguished and admired.

This book, which is recognised as a standard work abroad, is, I fear, owing to the fact of its being written in the Hebrew language, not sufficiently known in this country. Weiss does not want *our* recognition; we are rather in need of his instruction. Some general view

of his estimate of Jewish Tradition may, therefore, be of service to the student. It is, indeed, the only work of its kind. Zunz has confined himself to the history of the Agadah. Graetz gave most of his attention to the political side of Jewish history. But comparatively little has been done for the Halachah, though Frankel, Geiger, Herzfeld, and others have treated some single points in various monographs. Thus it was left for Weiss to write the *History of Tradition*, which includes both the Agadah and the Halachah. The treatment of this latter must have proved, in consequence of the intricate and intractable nature of its materials, by far the more difficult portion of his task.

In speaking of the *History of Tradition*, a term which suggests the fluctuating character of a thing, its origin, development, progress, and retrogression, we have already indicated that Weiss does not consider even the Halachah as having come down from heaven, ready-made, and definitely fixed for all time. To define it more clearly, Tradition is, apart from the few ordinances and certain usages for which there is no precedent in the Bible, the history of interpretation of the Scriptures, which was constantly liable to variation, not on grounds of philology, but through the subjective notions of successive generations regarding religion and the method and scope of its application.

Weiss's standpoint with reference to the Pentateuch is the conservative one, maintaining both its unity and its Mosaic authorship. Those passages and accounts in the Bible in which the modern critic discerns traces of different traditional sources, are for Weiss only indicative of the various stages of interpretation through which the

Pentateuch had to pass. The earliest stage was a very crude one, as may be seen from the case of Jephthah's vow, for which only a misinterpretation of certain passages in the Pentateuch (Gen. xxii. 2; Num. xxv. 4) could be made responsible. Nor was Jephthah, who felt himself bound to carry out his vow, acquainted with the provision for dissolving vows² that was sufficiently familiar to later ages. When, on the other hand, Jeremiah declared sacrifices to be altogether superfluous, and said that God did not command Israel, when he brought them from the land of Egypt, concerning burnt offerings or sacrifices (vii. 22), he was not in contradiction with Leviticus, but interpreted the laws contained in this book as a concession to popular custom, though not desirable on their own account. This concession, whenever it was of a harmless nature, the prophets carried so far as to permit altars outside the Tabernacle or Temple, though this was against the plain sense of Deuteronomy. Elijah even bewailed their destruction (1 Kings xix. 10). He and other prophets probably interpreted the law in question as directed against the construction and maintenance of several chief sanctuaries, but not against sacrificing in different places on minor occasions. This is evidently a free interpretation, or rather application, of the Law. Occasionally the conception as to when and how a law should be applied took a completely negative form. In this manner is to be explained the action of Solomon in suspending the Fast of the Day of Atonement before the festival he was going to celebrate in honour of the consecration of the Temple (1 Kings viii. 65), the king being convinced that on this unique occasion the latter was of more religious importance than the former. Weiss

thinks that the later custom of holding public dances in the vineyards on the 10th of Tishri might have had its origin in this solemn, but also joyful, festival. Ezekiel, again, though alluding more frequently than any other prophet to the laws in the Pentateuch, is exceedingly bold in his interpretation of them, as, for instance, when he says that *priests* shall not eat anything that is dead or torn (xliv. 31), which shows that he took the verses in Exod. xxii. 30, and Deut. xiv. 20, to have been meant only as a good advice to the laymen to refrain from eating these unclean things, but not as having for them the force of a real commandment.

Starting from this proposition, that there existed always some sort of interpretation running side by side with the recognised Scriptures, which from the very looseness of its connection with the letter of the Scripture could claim to be considered a thing independent in itself, and might therefore be regarded as the *Oral Law*, in contradistinction to the *Written Law*, the author passes to the age of the Second Temple, the period to which the rest of the first volume is devoted. In these pages Weiss reviews the activity of Ezra and Nehemiah, the ordinances of the Men of the Great Synagogue, the institutions of the Scribes, the Lives of the so-called Pairs,⁸ the characteristics of the three sects, the Sadducees, Pharisees, and Essenes, and the differences between the schools of Shammai and Hillel. To each of these subjects Weiss gives his fullest attention, and his discussions of them would form perfect monographs in themselves. To reproduce all the interesting matter would mean to translate the whole of this portion of his work into English. I shall only draw attention to one or two points.

First, this liberal interpretation was active during the whole period referred to. Otherwise no authority could have abolished the *lex talionis*, or have permitted war on Sabbath, or made the condition that no crime should be punished without a preceding warning (which was chiefly owing to the aversion of the Rabbis to the infliction of capital punishment), or have sanctioned the sacrificing of the Passover when the 14th of Nisan fell on Sabbath. Indeed Shemaiah and Abtalyon, in whose name Hillel communicated this last law, were called the Great Interpreters.⁴

Secondly, as to the so-called *laws given to Moses on Sinai*.⁵ Much has been said about these. The distinction claimed for them by some scholars, viz. that they were never contested, is not tenable, considering that there prevailed much difference of opinion about some of them. Nor is the theory that they were ancient religious usages, dating from time immemorial, entirely satisfactory. For though the fact may be true in itself, this could not have justified the Rabbis in calling them all Sinaitic laws, especially when they were aware that not a few of them were contested by certain of their colleagues, a thing that would have been quite impossible if they had a genuine claim to Mosaic authority. But if we understand Weiss rightly these laws are only to be considered as a specimen of the whole of the Oral Law, which was believed to emanate, both in its institutional and in its expository part, from the same authority. The conviction was firmly held that everything wise and good, be it ethical or ceremonial in its character, whose effect would be to strengthen the cause of religion, was at least potentially contained in the Torah, and that it only required an earnest religious mind

to find it there. Hence the famous adage that "everything which any student will teach at any future time was already communicated to Moses on Mount Sinai"; or the injunction that any acceptable truth, even if discovered by an insignificant man in Israel, should be considered as having the authority of a great sage or prophet, or even of Moses himself. The principle was that the words of the Torah are "fruitful and multiply."

It will probably be said that the laws of clean and unclean, and such like, have proved rather too prolific; but if we read Weiss carefully, we shall be reminded that it was by the same process of propagation that the Rabbis developed from Deut. xxii. 8, a whole code of sanitary and police-laws which could even now be studied with profit; from the few scanty civil laws in Exod. xxi., a whole *corpus juris*, which might well excite the interest and the admiration of any lawyer; and from the words "And thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children," a complete school-system on the one hand, and on the other the *résumé* of a liturgy that appears to have sufficed for the spiritual needs of more than fifty generations of Israelites.

Before we pass to the age of the Tannaim,⁶ the subject of Weiss's second volume, we must take account of two important events which have greatly influenced the further development of Tradition. I refer to the destruction of the Temple and the rise of Christianity. With the former event Judaism ceased to be a political commonwealth, and if "the nation was already in the times of Ezra converted into a church," — an assertion, by the way, which has not the least basis in fact, — it became the more so after it had lost the last remains of its independence. But it was a church without priests, or, since such a thing, as far as

history teaches us, has never existed, let us rather call it a Synagogue.

From this fact diverse results flowed. A Synagogue can exist not only without priests, but also without sacrifices, for which prayer and charity were a sufficient substitute. With the progress of time also many agricultural laws, as well as others relating to sacerdotal purity, gradually became obsolete, though they lingered on for some generations, and, as a venerable reminiscence of a glorious time, entered largely into Jewish literature. This disappearance of so many laws and the weakening of the national element, however, required, if Judaism was to continue to exist, the strengthening of religion from another side. The first thing needed was the creation of a new religious centre which would not only replace the Temple to a certain degree, but also bring about a greater solidarity of views, such as would render impossible the ancient differences that divided the schools of Hillel and Shammai. The creator of this centre was R. Johanan ben Zaccai, who founded the school of Jamnia, and invested it with the same authority and importance as the Sanhedrin had enjoyed during Temple times. The consciousness that they were standing before a new starting-point in history, with a large religious inheritance from the past, actuated them not only to collect the old traditional laws and to take stock of their religious institutions, but also to give them more definite shape and greater stability. As many of these traditions were by no means undisputed, the best thing was to bring them under one or other heading of the Scriptures. This desire gave the impulse to the famous hermeneutic schools of R. Akiba and R. Ishmael.

The next cause that contributed to give a more deter-

minate expression to the Law was the rise of Christianity. This is not the place to give an account of the views which the Rabbis entertained of Christianity. Suffice it to say they could not see in the destruction of the Law its fulfilment. They also thought that under certain conditions it is not only the letter that killeth, but also the spirit, or rather that the spirit may sometimes be clothed in a letter, which, in its turn, will slay more victims than the letter against which the loudest denunciations have been levelled. Spirit without letter, let theologians say what they will, is a mere phantasm. However, the new sect made claims to the gift of prophecy, which, as they thought, placed them above the Law. It would seem that this was a time of special excitement. The student of the Talmud finds that such marvels as predicting the future, reviving the dead, casting out demons, crossing rivers dry-shod, curing the sick by a touch or prayer, were the order of the day, and performed by scores of Rabbis. Voices from heaven were often heard, and strange visions were frequently beheld. Napoleon I. is said to have forbidden the holy coat of Treves to work miracles. The Jewish legislature, however, had no means of preventing these supernatural workings; but when the Rabbis saw their dangerous consequences, they insisted that miracles should have no influence on the interpretation and development of the Law. Hence the saying with regard to Lev. xxvii. 34, that no prophet is authorised to add a new law. And when R. Eliezer b. Hyrkanos (about 120 A.C.) thought to prove the justice of his case by the intervention of miracles, the majority answered that the fact of this or that variation, effected at his bidding, in the established order of nature, proved nothing for the soundness of his argument. Nay,

they even ignored the *Bath-Kol*⁷ (the celestial voice), which declared itself in favour of R. Eliezer, maintaining that the Torah having once been given to mankind, it is only the opinion of the majority that should decide on its interpretation and application. Very characteristic is the legend connected with this fact. When one of the Rabbis afterwards met Elijah and asked him what they thought in heaven of the audacity of his colleagues, the prophet answered, "God rejoiced and said, my children have conquered me."

Into such discredit did miracles fall at that period, whilst the opinion of the interpreting body, or the Sanhedrin, became more powerful than ever. These were merely dogmatical consequences. But new laws were enacted and old ones revived, with the object of resisting Christian influences over the Jews. To expand the Oral Law, and give it a firm basis in the Scriptures, were considered the best means of preserving Judaism intact. "Moses desired," an old legend narrates, "that the Mishnah also (that is Tradition) should be written down;" but foreseeing the time when the nations of the world would translate the Torah into Greek, and would assert their title to rank as the Children of God, the Lord refused to permit tradition to be recorded otherwise than by word of mouth. The claim of the Gentiles might then be refuted by asking them whether they were also in possession of "the Mystery." The Rabbis therefore concentrated their attention upon "the Mystery," and this contributed largely towards making the expository methods of R. Akiba and R. Ishmael, to which I have above referred, the main object of their study in the schools.

It would, however, be a mistake to think that the San-

hedrin now spent their powers in "enforcing retrograde measures and creating a strange exegesis." I especially advise the student to read carefully that admirable chapter (VII., of Vol. II.) in which Weiss classifies all the Ordinances, "Fences," Decrees, and Institutions, dating both from this and from earlier ages, under ten headings, and also shows their underlying principles. The main object was to preserve the Jewish religion by strengthening the principle of Jewish nationality, and to preserve the nationality by the aid of religion. But sometimes the Rabbis also considered it necessary to preserve religion against itself, so to speak, or, as they expressed it, "When there is time to work for the Lord, they make void thy Torah." This authorised the *Beth Din*⁸ to act in certain cases against the letter of the Torah. "The welfare of the World" was another great consideration. By "World" they understood both the religious and the secular world. From a regard to the former resulted such "Fences" and Ordinances as were directed against "the transgressors," as well as the general injunction to "keep aloof from what is morally unseemly, and from whatever bears any likeness thereto." In the interests of the latter—the welfare of the secular world—they enacted such laws as either tended to elevate the position of women, or to promote the peace and welfare of members of their own community, or to improve the relations between Jews and their Gentile neighbours. They also held the great principle that nothing is so injurious to the cause of religion as increasing the number of sinners by needless severity. Hence the introduction of many laws "for the benefit of penitents," and the maxim not to issue any decree which may prove too heavy a burden to the majority of the com-

munity. The relaxation of certain traditional laws was also permitted when they involved a serious loss of property, or the sacrifice of a man's dignity. Some old decrees were even permitted to fall into oblivion when public opinion was too strong against them, the Rabbis holding that it was often better for Israelites to be unconscious sinners than wilful transgressors. The *Minhag*, or religious custom, also played an important part, it being assumed that it must have been first introduced by some eminent authority; but, if there was reason to believe that the custom owed its origin to some fancy of the populace, and that it had a pernicious effect on the multitude, no compunction was felt in abolishing it.

Very important it is to note that the Oral Law had not at this period assumed a character of such rigidity that all its ordinances, etc., had to be looked upon as irremovable for all times. With those who think otherwise, a favourite quotation is the administrative measure laid down in Tractate *Evidences*,⁹ I. 5, where we read that no *Beth Din* has the right of annulling the dicta of another *Beth Din*, unless it is stronger in numbers (having a larger majority) and greater in wisdom than its fellow tribunal. Confess with becoming modesty that the world is always going downhill, decreasing both in numbers and in wisdom, and the result follows that any decision by the earlier Rabbis is fixed law for all eternity. Weiss refutes such an idea not only as inconsistent with the nature of Tradition, but also as contradictory to the facts. He proves by numerous instances that the Rabbis did abolish ordinances and decrees introduced by preceding authorities, and that the whole conception is based on a misunderstanding. For the rule in question, as Weiss clearly points out, originally only meant

that a *Beth Din* has no right to undo the decrees of another *contemporary Beth Din*, unless it was justified in doing so by the weight of its greater authority. This was necessary if a central authority was to exist at all. Weiss is indeed of opinion that the whole passage is a later interpolation from the age of R. Simeon b. Gamaliel II., when certain Rabbis tried to emancipate themselves from the authority of the Patriarch. But it was not meant that the decision of a *Beth Din* should have perpetual binding power for all posterity. This was left to the discretion of the legislature of each generation, who had to examine whether the original cause for maintaining such decision still existed.

The rest of this volume is for the greater part taken up with complete monographs of the Patriarchs and the heads of the schools of that age, whilst the concluding chapters give us the history of the literature, the Midrash, Mechilta, Siphra, Siphre, Mishnah, etc., which contain both the Halachic and the Agadic sayings emanating from these authorities.

With regard to these Patriarchs, I should like only to remark that Weiss defends them against the charge made by Schorr and others, who accuse them of having assumed too much authority on account of their noble descent, and who describe their opponents as the true friends of the people. Weiss is no lover of such specious phrases. The qualifications required for the leadership of the people were a right instinct for the necessities of their time, a fair amount of secular knowledge, and, what is of chief importance, an unbounded love and devotion to those over whose interests they were called to watch. These distinctions, as Weiss proves, the descendants of Hillel possessed in the

highest degree. It is true that occasionally, as for instance in the famous controversy of R. Gamaliel II. with R. Joshua b. Hananiah, or that of R. Simeon b. Gamaliel II. with R. Nathan and R. Meir, they made their authority too heavily felt;¹⁰ but this was again another necessity of those troubled times, when only real unity could save Israel.

However, Weiss is no partisan, and the love he lavishes on his favourite heroes does not exhaust his resources of sympathy and appreciation for members of the other schools. Weiss is no apologist either, and does not make the slightest attempt towards explaining away even the defects of R. Akiba in his somewhat arbitrary method of interpretation, which our author thinks much inferior to the expository rules of R. Ishmael; but this does not prevent him from admiring his excellences.

Altogether it would seem that Weiss thinks R. Akiba more happy in his quality as a great saint than in that of a great exegete. What is most admirable is the instinct with which Weiss understands how to emphasise the right thing in its right place. As an indication of the literary honesty and marvellous industry of our author, I would draw attention to the fact that the sketch of R. Akiba and his school alone is based on more than two thousand quotations scattered over the whole area of the Rabbinic literature; but he points in a special note to a sentence attributed to R. Akiba, which presents the whole man and his generation in a single stroke. I refer to that passage in Tractate *Joys*,¹¹ in which R. Akiba speaks of the four types of sufferers. He draws the comparison of a king chastising his children; the first son maintains stubborn silence, the second simply rebels, the third suppli-

cates for mercy, and the fourth (the best of sons) says: "Father, proceed with thy chastisement, as David said, Wash me thoroughly from mine iniquity and cleanse me from my sin" (Ps. li. 4). This absolute submission to the will of God, which perceives in suffering only an expression of His fatherly love and mercy, was the ideal of R. Akiba.

The great literary production of this period was the Mishnah, which, through the high authority of its compiler, R. Judah the Patriarch, his saintliness and popularity, soon superseded all the collections of a similar kind, and became the official text-book of the Oral Law. But a text requires interpretation, whilst other collections also demanded some attention. This brings us to the two *Talmuds*, namely, the Talmud of Jerusalem and the Talmud of Babylon, the origin and history of which form the subject of Weiss's third volume.

Here again the first chapters are more of a preliminary character, giving the student some insight into the labyrinth of the Talmud. The two chapters entitled "The instruments employed in erecting the great Edifice," and the "Workmanship displayed by the Builders," give evidence of almost unrivalled familiarity with the Rabbinical literature, and of critical powers of the rarest kind. Now these instruments were by no means new, for, as Weiss shows, the Amoraim employed in interpreting the Mishnah the same explanatory rules that are known to us from the School of R. Ishmael as "the Thirteen Rules by which the Torah is explained," though they appear in the Talmud under other names, and are in reality only a species of Midrash. Besides this there comes another element into play. It was the exaggerated awe of all

earlier authorities that endeavoured to reconcile the most contradictory statements by means of a subtle dialectic for which the schools in Babylon were especially famous. There were certainly many opponents of this system, and from the monographs which Weiss gives on the various heads of the western and eastern schools we see that not all followed this method, and some among them even condemned it in the strongest words. However, it cannot be denied that there is a strong scholastic feature in the Talmud, which is very far from what we should look for in a trustworthy exegesis. Thus we must not always expect to find in the Talmud the true meaning of the sayings of their predecessors, and it is certain that a more scientific method in many cases has led to results the very opposite of those at which the later Rabbis have arrived. This fact was already recognised in the sixteenth century, though only in part, by R. Yom-Tob Heller and others. Only he insisted that in this matter a line must be drawn between theory and practice. But Weiss gives irrefragable proofs that even this line was often overstepped by the greatest authorities, though they remained always within the limits of Tradition. Indeed, as Weiss points out, not every saying to be found in the Talmud is to be looked upon as representing Tradition; for there is much in it which only gives the individual opinion or is merely an interpolation of later hands; nor does the Talmud contain the *whole* of Tradition, this latter proceeding and advancing with the time, and corresponding to its conditions and notions. As we read Weiss, the conviction is borne in upon us that there was a Talmud before, and another after *The Talmud*.

Much space in this volume is given to the Agadah and

the so-called "Teachers of the Agadah." Weiss makes no attempt at apology for that which seems to us strange, or even repugnant in this part of the Rabbinic literature. The greatest fault to be found with those who wrote down such passages as appear objectionable to us is, perhaps, that they did not observe the wise rule of Johnson, who said to Boswell on a certain occasion, "Let us get serious, for there comes a fool." And the fools unfortunately did come in the shape of certain Jewish commentators and Christian controversialists, who took as serious things which were only the expression of a momentary impulse, or represented the opinion of some isolated individual, or were meant simply as a piece of humorous by-play, calculated to enliven the interest of a languid audience. But on the other hand, as Weiss proves, the Agadah contains also many elements of real edification and eternal truths as well as abundant material for building up the edifice of dogmatic Judaism. Talmudical quotations of such a nature are scattered by thousands over Weiss's work, particularly in those chapters in which he describes the lives of the greatest Rabbinical heroes. But the author lays the student under special obligations by putting together in the concluding pages of this volume some of these sentences, and classifying them under various headings. I give here a few extracts. For the references to authorities I must direct the reader to the original:—

"The unity of God is the keystone of dogmatic Judaism. The Rabbis give Israel the credit of having proclaimed to the world the unity of God. They also say that Israel took an oath never to change Him for another God. This only God is eternal, incorporeal, and immutable. And though the prophets saw Him in different aspects, He

warned them that they must not infer from the visions vouchsafed to them that there are different Gods. 'I am the first,' He tells them, which implies that he had no father, and the words, 'There is no God besides me,' mean that he has no son. Now, this God, the God of Israel, is holy in every thinkable way of holiness. He is merciful and gracious, as it is said, 'And I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious,' even though he who is the recipient of God's grace has no merit of his own. 'And I will show mercy to whom I will show mercy,' that is, even to those who do not deserve it. His attributes are righteousness, loving-kindness, and truth. God speaks words of eternal truth, even as He himself is the eternal life. All that the Merciful One does is only for good, and even in the time of His anger He remembers His graciousness, and often suppresses His attribute of judgment before His attribute of mercy. But with the righteous God is more severe than with the rest of the world, and when His hand falls in chastening on His saints His name becomes awful, revered, and exalted. This God of Israel, again, extends His providence over all mankind, and especially over Israel. By His eye everything is foreseen, yet freedom of choice is given, and the world is judged by grace, yet all according to the works wrought. Hence, know what is above thee, a seeing eye and a hearing ear, and that all thy deeds are written in a book.

"They [the Rabbis] believed that God created the world out of nothing, without toil and without weariness. This world was created by the combination of His two attributes, mercy and justice. He rejoices in His creation, and if the Maker praises it, who dares to blame it? And if He exults in it, who shall find a blemish in it? Nay, it is

a glorious and a beautiful world. It is created for man, and its other denizens were all meant but to serve him. Though all mankind are formed after the type of Adam, no one is like his fellow-man (each one having an individuality of his own). Thus he is able to say, 'For my sake, also, was the world created'; and with this thought his responsibilities increase. But the greatest love shown to man is that he was created in the image of God. Man is a being possessed of free will, and, though everything is given on pledge, whosoever wishes to borrow may come and borrow. Everything is in the gift of Heaven except the fear of God. In man's heart abide both the evil inclination and the good inclination; and the words of Scripture, 'Thou shalt not bow down before a strange god,' point to the strange god who is within man himself, who entices him to sin in this world, and gives evidence against him in the next. But the Holy One — blessed be He! — said, 'I have created the evil inclination, but I have also created its antidote, the Torah.' And when man is occupied with the Torah and in works of charity, he becomes the master of the evil inclination; otherwise, he is its slave. When man reflects the image of God, he is the lord of creation, and is feared by all creatures; but this image is defaced by sin, and then he has no power over the universe, and is in fear of all things.

"Another principle of Judaism is the belief in reward and punishment. 'I am the Lord, your God,' means, 'it is I who am prepared to recompense you for your good actions, and to bring retribution upon you for your evil deeds.' God does not allow to pass unrewarded even the merit of a kind and considerate word. By the same measure which man metes out, it shall be meted out to

him. Because thou drownedst others, they have drowned thee, and at the last they who drowned thee shall themselves be drowned. Though it is not in our power to explain either the prosperity of the wicked or the affliction of the righteous, nevertheless know before whom thou toilest, and who thy employer is, who will pay thee the reward of thy labour. Here at thy door is a poor man standing, and at his right hand standeth God. If thou grantest his request, be certain of thy reward; but if thou refusest, think of him who is by the side of the poor, and will avenge it on thee. 'God seeketh the persecuted' to defend him, even though it be the wicked who is persecuted by the righteous. The soul of man is immortal, the souls of the righteous being treasured up under the throne of God. Know that everything is according to the reckoning, and let not thy imagination give thee hope that the grave will be a place of refuge for thee, for perforce thou wast formed, and perforce thou wast born, and thou livest perforce, and perforce thou wilt die, and perforce thou wilt in the future have to give account and reckoning before the Supreme King of kings, the Holy One, blessed be He.

"The advent of the Messiah is another article of the belief of the Rabbis. But if a man tell thee that he knows when the redemption of Israel will take place, believe him not, for this is one of the unrevealed secrets of the Almighty. The mission of Elijah is to bring peace into the world, while the Messiah, in whose days Israel will regain his national independence, will lead the whole world in repentance to God. On this, it is believed, will follow the resurrection of the dead.

"Another main principle in the belief of the Rabbis

is the election of Israel, which imposes on them special duties, and gives them a peculiar mission. Beloved are Israel, for they are called the children of God, and His firstborn. 'They shall endure for ever' through the merit of their fathers. There is an especial covenant established between God and the tribes of Israel. God is their father, and He said to them, My children, even as I have no contact with the profanity of the world, so also withdraw yourselves from it. And as I am holy, be ye also holy. Nay, sanctify thyself by refraining even from that which is not forbidden thee. There is no holiness without chastity.

"The main duty of Israel is to sanctify the name of God, for the Torah was only given that His great name might be glorified. Better is it that a single letter of the law be cast out than that the name of Heaven be profaned. And this also is the mission of Israel in this world: to sanctify the name of God, as it is written, 'This people have I formed for myself, that they may show forth my praise.' Or, 'And thou shalt love the Lord thy God,' which means, Thou shalt make God beloved by all creatures, even as Abraham did. Israel is the light of the world; as it is said, 'And nations shall walk by thy light.' But he who profanes the name of Heaven in secret will suffer the penalty thereof in public; and this whether the Heavenly Name be profaned in ignorance or in wilfulness.

"Another duty towards God is to love Him and to fear Him. God's only representative on earth is the God-fearing man. Woe unto those who are occupied in the study of the Torah, but who have no fear of God. But a still higher duty it is to perform the commandments of God from love. For greater is he who submits to the will of God from love than he who does so from fear.

"Now, how shall man love God? This is answered in the words of Scripture, 'And these words shall be upon thy heart.' For by them thou wilt recognise Him whose word called the world into existence, and follow His divine attributes.

"God is righteous; be ye also righteous, O Israel. By righteousness the Rabbis understand love of truth, hatred of lying and backbiting. The seal of the Holy One, blessed be He, is Truth, of which the actions of man should also bear the impress. Hence, let thy yea be yea, and thy nay, nay. He who is honest in money transactions, unto him this is reckoned as if he had fulfilled the whole of the Torah. Greater is he who earns his livelihood by the labour of his hands than even the God-fearing man; whilst the righteous judge is, as it were, the companion of God in the government of the world. For upon three things the world stands: upon truth, upon judgment, upon peace; as it is said, 'Judge ye the truth and the judgment of peace in your gates.' But he who breaks his word, his sin is as great as if he worshipped idols; and God, who punished the people of the time of the Flood, will also punish him who does not stand by his word. Such a one belongs to one of the four classes who are not admitted into the presence of the Shechinah; these are the scoffers, the hypocrites (who bring the wrath of God into the world), the liars, and the slanderers. The sin of the slanderer is like that of one who would deny the root (the root of all religion, *i.e.* the existence of God). The greatest of liars, however, is he who perjures himself, which also involves the sin of profanation of the name of God. The hypocrite, who insinuates himself into people's good opinions, who wears his phylacteries and is en-

wrapped in his gown with the fringes, and secretly commits sins, equally transgresses the command, 'Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain.'

"God is gracious and merciful; therefore man also should be gracious and merciful. Hence, 'Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself,' which is a main principle in the Torah. What is unpleasant to thyself, do not unto thy neighbour. This is the whole Torah, to which the rest is only to be considered as a commentary. And this love is also extended to the stranger, for as it is said with regard to Israel, 'And thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself,' so is it also said, 'And thou shalt love him (the stranger) as thyself.' And thus said God to Israel, 'My beloved children, Am I in want of anything that I should request it of you? But what I ask of you is that you should love, honour, and respect one another.' Therefore, love mankind, and bring them near to the Torah. Let the honour of thy friend be as dear to thee as thine own. Condemn not thy fellow-man until thou art come into his place, and judge all men in the scale of merit. Say not 'I will love scholars, but hate their disciples;' or even, 'I will love the disciples, but hate the ignorant,' but love all, for he who hates his neighbour is as bad as a murderer. Indeed, during the age of the second Temple, men studied the Torah and the commandments, and performed works of charity, but they hated each other, a sin that outweighs all other sins, and for which the holy Temple was destroyed. Be careful not to withdraw thy mercy from any man, for he who does so rebels against the kingdom of God on earth. Walk in the ways of God, who is merciful even to the wicked, and as He is gracious alike to those who know Him, and to those who know

Him not, so be thou. Indeed, charity is one of the three pillars on which the world is based. It is more precious than all other virtues. The man who gives charity in secret is greater even than Moses our teacher. An act of charity and love it is to pray for our fellow-man, and to admonish him. 'Thou shalt in any wise rebuke thy neighbour, and not suffer sin upon him' (Lev. xix. 18), means it is thy duty to admonish him a hundred times if need be, even if he be thy superior; for Jerusalem was only destroyed for the sin of its people in not admonishing one another. The man whose protest would be of any weight, and who does not exercise his authority (when any wrong is about to be committed), is held responsible for the whole world.

"Peacefulness and humility are also the fruit of love. Be of the disciples of Aaron, loving peace, and pursuing peace. Let every man be cautious in the fear of God; let him ever give the soft answer that turneth away wrath; let him promote peace, not only among his own relatives and acquaintances, but also among the Gentiles. For (the labour of) all the prophets was to plant peace in the world. Be exceeding lowly of spirit, since the hope of man is but the worm. Be humble as Hillel, for he who is humble causes the Divine presence to dwell with man. But the proud man makes God say, 'I and he cannot dwell in the same place.' He who runs after glory, glory flees from him, and he who flees from glory, glory shall pursue him. Be of those who are despised rather than of those who despise; of the persecuted rather than of the persecutors; be of those who bear their reproach in silence and answer not.

"Another distinctive mark of Judaism is faith in God,

and perfect confidence in Him. Which is the right course for a man to choose for himself? Let him have a strong faith in God, as it is said, 'Mine eye shall be upon the faithful (meaning those possessing faith in God) of the land.' And so also Habakkuk based the whole Torah on the principle of faith, as it is said, 'And the just shall live by his faith' (ii. 4). He who but fulfils a single commandment in absolute faith in God deserves that the Holy Spirit should rest on him. Blessed is the man who fears God in private, and trusts in Him with all his heart, for such fear and trust arms him against every misfortune. He who puts his trust in the Holy One, blessed be He, God becomes his shield and protection in this world and in the next. He who has bread in his basket for to-day, and says, 'What shall I have to eat to-morrow?' is a man of little faith. One consequence of real faith is always to believe in the justice of God's judgments. It is the duty of man to thank God when he is visited with misfortune as he does in the time of prosperity. Therefore, blessed is the man who, when visited by suffering, questions not God's justice. But what shall he do? Let him examine his conduct and repent.

"For repentance is the greatest prerogative of man. Better is one hour of repentance and good deeds in this world than the whole life of the world to come. The aim of all wisdom is repentance and good deeds. The place where the truly penitent shall stand is higher than that of the righteous. Repentance finds its special expression in prayer; and when it is said in Scripture, 'Serve God with all thy heart,' by this is meant, serve Him by prayer, which is even greater than worship by means of sacrifices. Never is a prayer entirely unanswered by God. There-

fore, even though the sword be on a man's neck, let him not cease to supplicate God's mercy. But regard not thy prayer as a fixed mechanical task, but as an appeal for mercy and grace before the All-Present; as it is said, 'For He is gracious and full of mercy, slow to anger, abounding in loving-kindness, and repenteth him of the evil.'"

The last two volumes of Weiss's work deal with the history of Tradition during the Middle Ages, that is, from the conclusion of the Talmud to the compilation of the Code of the Law by R. Joseph Caro. I have already indicated that with Weiss Tradition did not terminate with the conclusion of the Talmud. It only means that a certain undefinable kind of literature, mostly held in dialogue form and containing many elements of Tradition, was at last brought to an end. The authorities who did this editorial work were the so-called *Rabbanan Saburai*¹² and the *Gaonim*, whose lives and literary activity are fully described by Weiss. But, while thus engaged in preserving their inheritance from the past, they were also enriching Tradition by new contributions, both the Saburai and the Gaonim having not only added to and diminished from the Talmud, but having also introduced avowedly new ordinances and decrees, and created new institutions.

Now, it cannot be denied that a few of these ordinances and decrees had a reforming tendency (see the second and twentieth chapters of vol. iv.); in general, however, they took a more conservative turn than was the case in the previous ages. This must be ascribed to the event of the great schism within the Rabbinical camp itself. I refer to the rise of Caraim, which took place during the first half of the eighth century.

There is probably no work in which the Halachic or legalistic side of this sect is better described than in this volume of Weiss. I regret that I am unable to enter into its details. But I cannot refrain from pointing to one of the main principles of the Caraites. This was "Search the Scriptures." Now this does not look very dissimilar from the principle held by the Rabbis. For what else is the Talmud, but a thorough searching through the Bible for whatever was suggestive by time and circumstances? The light which the Caraites applied to the searching of the Scriptures was the same which illumined the paths of the Rabbis' investigations. They employed most of the expository rules of the Tannaite schools. The fact is that they were only determined to find something different from what the Rabbis found in the Scriptures. They wanted to have gloomy Sabbaths and Festivals, and discovered authority for it in the Bible; they wanted to retain most of the dietary laws which had their root only in Tradition, but insisted on petty differences which they thought might be inferred from the Scriptures, and they created a new "order of inheritance," and varied the forbidden degrees in marriage, in all which the only merit was that they were in contradiction to the interpretation of the Rabbis. They also refused to accept the Liturgy of Rabbinical Judaism, but never succeeded in producing more than a patch-work from verses of the Bible, which, thus recast, they called a prayer-book. There were undoubtedly among their leaders many serious and sincere men, but they give us the impression of prigs, as for instance, Moses Darai, when he reproaches the Rabbinical Jews for having an "easy religion," or Israel Hammaarabi, when he recommended his book on the laws regarding the slaughtering

of animals, as having the special advantage that his decisions were always on the more stringent side. Those who made a pilgrimage to the Holy Land were by the Caraites canonised as "mourners." The Rabbanite R. Judah Hallevi also visited the ruins of Jerusalem, but he did something more than "mourn and sigh and cry," he became a God-intoxicated singer, and wrote the "Zion-Elegy." The novel terminology which they use in their exegetical and theological works, was only invented to spite the Rabbanites, and marks its authors as pedants. On the other hand, it is not to be denied that their opponents did not employ the best means to conciliate them. The Middle Ages knew no other remedy against schism than excommunication, and the Gaonim were the children of their time. Nor were the arguments which the latter brought forward in defence of Tradition always calculated to convince the Caraites of their error. When R. Saadiah, in his apology for the institution of the Second Day of the Festival,¹³ went the length of assigning to it a Sinaitic origin, he could only succeed in making the Caraites more suspicious of the claims of Tradition than before. In a later generation one of his own party, R. Hai Gaon, had to declare his predecessor's words a "controversial exaggeration." The zeal which some of the Gaonim showed in their defence of such works as the *Chambers* and the *Measure of the Stature* ¹⁴ was a not less unfortunate thing, for it involved the Rabbanites in unnecessary responsibilities for a new class of literature of doubtful origin, which in succeeding centuries was disowned by the best minds in Judaism.

The Gaonic period, to which we also owe the rise of the Massorah and the introduction of points in the text of the

Bible.—of which Weiss treats fully in the twenty-third and twenty-fourth chapters of vol. iv. — comes to an end with the death of R. Hai. The famous schools of Sura and Pumbeditha, over which these two Gaonim presided, fell into decay, and Babylon ceased to be the centre of Judaism. To be more exact, we should say that Judaism had no longer any real centre. Instead of dwelling in one place for centuries, we now have to be perpetually on our journey, accompanying our authors through all the inhabited parts of the world — France, Italy, Spain, Germany, with an occasional trip to Africa and Russia. There we shall meet with the new schools, each of which, though interpreting the same Torah, occupied with the study of the same Talmud, and even conforming more or less to the same mode of life, has an individuality and character of its own, reflecting the thought and habits of the country which it represents. Thus “geographical Judaism” becomes a factor in history which no scholar can afford to neglect. It is true that Judaism never remained entirely unbiassed by foreign ideas, and our author points in many a place to Persian, Greek, and Roman influences on Tradition; still, these influences seem to have undergone such a thorough “Judaization” that it is only the practised eye of the scholar that is able to see through the transformation. But it requires no great skill to discriminate between the work produced by a Spanish and that of a French Rabbi. Though both would write in Hebrew, they betray themselves very soon by the style, diction, and train of thought peculiar to each country. The Spaniard is always logical, clear, and systematising, whilst the French Rabbi has very little sense of order, is always writing occasional notes, has a great tendency to be

obscure, but is mostly profound and critical. Hence the fact that whilst Spain produced the greatest codifiers of the law, we owe to France and Germany the best commentaries on the Talmud. What these codes and commentaries meant for Judaism the student will find in Weiss's book, and still more fully in his admirable essays on Rashi (Solomon b. Isaac), Maimonides, and R. Jacob Tam (published in his periodical, *Beth Talmud*, and also separately). It is enough for us here only to notice the fact of the breadth of Tradition, which could include within its folds men of such different types as the sceptics, Maimonides, Solomon b. Gabirol, and Abn Ezra on one side, and the simple "non-questioning" Rabbenu Gershom, Rashi, and Jacob Tam on the other.

The last three centuries, which occupy our author's attention in the fifth volume, are not remarkable for their progress. The world lives on the past. The rationalists write treatises on Maimonides' philosophical works, whilst the German Talmudists add commentary to commentary. It is, indeed, the reign of authority, "modified by accidents." Such an accident was the struggle between the Maimonists and Anti-Maimonists, or the rise of the Cabalah, or the frequent controversies with Christians, all of which tended to direct the minds of people into new channels of thought. But though this period is less original in its work, it is not on that account less sympathetic. One cannot read those beautiful descriptions which Weiss gives of R. Meir of Rothenburg and his school, or of R. Asher and his descendants, without feeling that one is in an atmosphere of saints, who are the more attractive the less they were conscious of their own saintliness. The only mistake, perhaps, was that the successors of these

"Chassidim or pious men of Germany" looked on many of the religious customs that were merely the voluntary expression of particularly devout souls as worthy of imitation by the whole community, and made them obligatory upon all.

This brings us to the question of the Code already mentioned (by R. Joseph Caro), with which Weiss's work concludes. I have already transgressed the limits of an essay, without flattering myself that I have done anything like justice to the greatest work on Jewish Tradition which modern Jewish genius has produced. But I should not like the reader to carry away with him the false impression that our author shares in the general cry, "Save us from the Codifiers." Weiss, himself a Rabbi, and the disciple of the greatest Rabbis of the first half of this century, is quite aware of the impossibility of having a law without a kind of manual to it, which brings the fluid matter into some fixed form, classifying it under its proper headings, and this is what we call codifying the law. And thus he never passes any attempt made in this direction without paying due tribute to its author — be it Maimonides or Caro. But however great the literary value of a code may be, it does not invest it with the attribute of infallibility, nor does it exempt the student or the Rabbi who makes use of it from the duty of examining each paragraph on its own merits, and subjecting it to the same rules of interpretation that were always applied to Tradition. Indeed, Weiss shows that Maimonides deviated in some cases from his own code, when it was required by circumstances.

Nor do I know any modern author who is more in favour of strong authority than Weiss. His treatment of

the struggle between the Patriarch R. Gamaliel and his adversaries, which I have touched on above, proves this sufficiently. What Weiss really objects to, is a *weak* authority—I mean that phonograph-like authority which is always busy in reproducing the voice of others without an opinion of its own, without originality, without initiative and discretion. The real authorities are those who, drawing their inspiration from the past, also understand how to reconcile us with the present and to prepare us for the future.

VIII

THE DOCTRINE OF DIVINE RETRIBUTION IN RABBINICAL LITERATURE

"BLESSED be he who knows." These are the words with which Nachmanides, in his classical treatise, *Gate of Reward*, dismisses a certain theory of the Gaonim with regard to this question; after which he proceeds to expound another theory, which seems to him more satisfactory. This mode of treatment implies that, unsatisfactory as the one or other theory may appear to us, it would be presumptuous to reject either entirely, there being only One who knows the exact truth about the great mystery. But we may indicate our doubt about one doctrine by putting by its side another, which we may affirm to be not more absolutely true, but more probable. This seems to have been the attitude, too, of the compilers of the ancient Rabbinical literature, in which the most conflicting views about this grave subject were embodied. Nor did the Synagogue in general feel called upon to decide between these views. There is indeed no want of theodicies, for almost every important expounder of Job, as well as every Jewish philosopher of note, has one with its own system of retribution. Thus Judaism has no fixed doctrine on the subject. It refused a hearing to no theory, for fear that it should

contain some germ of truth, but on the same ground it accepted none to the exclusion of the others.

These theories may, perhaps, be conveniently reduced to the two following main doctrines that are in direct opposition to each other, whilst all other views about the subject will be treated as the more or less logical results of the one or other doctrine.

1. There is no death without (preceding) sin, nor affliction without (preceding) transgression.¹ This view is cited in the name of R. Ammi, who quoted in corroboration the verses Ez. xviii. 20, and Ps. lxxxix. 33. Though this Rabbi flourished towards the end of the third century, there is hardly any doubt that his view was held by the authorities of a much earlier date. For it can only be under the sway of such a notion of Retribution that the Tannaim were so anxious to assign some great crime as the antecedent to every serious calamity by which mankind was visited. The following illustrations will suffice:—"Pestilence comes into the world for capital crimes mentioned in the Torah, which are not brought before the earthly tribunal. . . . Noisome beasts come into the world for vain swearing and for profanation of the name (of God). Captivity comes upon the world for strange worship and incest, and for shedding of blood and for (not) giving release to the land." As an example of the misfortune befalling the individual I will merely allude to a passage in another tractate of the Talmud, according to which leprosy is to be regarded as the penalty for immorality, slander, perjury, and similar sins.²

If we were now to complement R. Ammi's view by adding that there is no happiness without some preceding merit—and there is no serious objection to making this

addition — then it would resolve itself into the theory of Measure for Measure, which forms a very common standard of reward and punishment in Jewish literature. Here are a few instances:—“Because the Egyptians wanted to destroy Israel by water (Exod. i. 22), they were themselves destroyed by the waters of the Red Sea, as it is said, Therefore I will *measure* their former work into their bosom (Is. lxxv. 7);” whilst, on the other hand, we read, “Because Abraham showed himself hospitable towards strangers, providing them with water (Gen. xviii. 4), God gave to his children a country blessed with plenty of water (Deut. viii. 1).” Sometimes this form of retribution goes so far as to define a special punishment to that part of the body which mostly contributed to the committing of the sin. Thus we read, “Samson rebelled against God by his eyes, as it is said, Get her (the Philistine woman) for me, for she pleases *my eyes* (Judg. xvi. 21); therefore his *eyes* were put out by the Philistines (Judg. xviii. 9);” whilst Absalom, whose sinful pride began by his *hair* (2 Sam. xiv. 25), met his fate by his *hair* (2 Sam. xviii. 9).³ Nahum of Gemzo himself explained his blindness and the maimed condition of his arms and legs as a consequence of a specific offence in having neglected the duty of succouring a poor man. Addressing the dead body of the suppliant who perished while Nahum was delaying his help, he said, “Let my eyes (which had no pity for your pitiful gaze) become blind; may my hands and legs (that did not hasten to help thine) become maimed, and finally my whole body be covered with boils.”⁴ “This was the hand that wrote it,” said Cranmer at the stake; “therefore it shall first suffer punishment.”

It is worth noticing that this retribution does not always

consist in a material reward, but, as Ben Azzai expressed it: "The reward of a command is a command, and the reward of a transgression is a transgression."⁵ So again: "Because Abraham showed himself so magnanimous in his treatment of the king of Sodom, and said, I will not take from thee a thread; therefore, his children enjoyed the privilege of having the command of Zizith, consisting in putting a thread or fringe in the border of their garments." In another passage we read, "He who is anxious to do acts of charity will be rewarded by having the means enabling him to do so."⁶ In more general terms the same thought is expressed when the Rabbis explained the words, Ye shall sanctify yourselves, and ye shall be holy (Lev. xi. 44), to the effect that if man takes the initiative in holiness, even though in a small way, Heaven will help him to reach it to a much higher degree.⁷

Notwithstanding these passages, to which many more might be added, it cannot be denied that there are in the Rabbinical literature many passages holding out promises of *material* reward to the righteous as well as threatening the wicked with *material* punishment. Nor is there any need of denying it. Simple-minded men — and such the majority of the Rabbis were — will never be persuaded into looking with indifference on pain and pleasure; they will be far from thinking that poverty, loss of children, and sickness are no evil, and that a rich harvest, hope of posterity, and good health, are not desirable things. It *does* lie in our nature to consider the former as curses and the latter as blessings; "and if this be wrong there is no one to be made responsible for it but the Creator of nature." Accordingly the question must arise, How can a just and omnipotent God allow it to happen that men

should suffer innocently? The most natural suggestion towards solving the difficulty would be that we are *not* innocent. Hence R. Ammi's assertion that affliction and death are both the outcome of sin and transgression; or, as R. Chanina ben Dossa expressed it, "It is not the wild beast but sin which kills."⁸

We may thus perceive in this theory an attempt "to justify the ways of God to man." Unfortunately it does not correspond with the real facts. The cry wrung from the prophets against the peace enjoyed by the wicked, and the pains inflicted on the righteous, which finds its echo in so many Psalms, and reaches its climax in the Book of Job, was by no means silenced in the times of the Rabbis. If long experience could be of any use, it only served to deepen perplexity. For all this suffering of the people of God, and the prosperity of their wicked persecutors, which perplexed the prophets and their immediate followers, were repeated during the death-struggle for independence against Rome, and were not lessened by the establishment of Christianity as the dominant religion. The only comfort which time brought them was, perhaps, that the long continuance of misfortune made them less sensible to suffering than their ancestors were. Indeed, a Rabbi of the first century said that his generation had by continuous experience of misery become as insensible to pain as the dead body is to a prick of a needle.⁹ The anæsthetic effect of long suffering may, indeed, help one to endure pain with more patience, but it cannot serve as an apology for the deed of the inflictors of the pain. The question, then, how to reconcile hard reality with the justice of God, remained as difficult as ever.

The most important passage in Rabbinical literature relating to the solution of this problem is the following:— With reference to Exod. xxxiii. 13, R. Johanan said, in the name of R. José, that, among other things, Moses also asked God to explain to him the method of his Providence, a request that was granted to him. He asked God, Why are there righteous people who are prosperous, and righteous who suffer; wicked who are prosperous and wicked who suffer? The answer given to him was, according to the one view, that the prosperity of the wicked and the suffering of the righteous are a result of the conduct of their ancestors, the former being the descendants of righteous parents and enjoying their merits, whilst the latter, coming from a bad stock, suffer for the sins of those to whom they owe their existence. This view was suggested by the Scriptural words, "Keeping mercy for thousands (of generations) . . . visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children" (Exod. xxxiv. 7), which were regarded as the answer to Moses' question in the preceding chapter of Exodus.¹⁰ Prevalent, however, as this view may have been in ancient times, the Rabbis never allowed it to pass without some qualification. It is true that they had no objection to the former part of this doctrine, and they speak very frequently of the "Merits of the Fathers" for which the remotest posterity is rewarded; for this could be explained on the ground of the boundless goodness of God, which cannot be limited to the short space of a lifetime. But there was no possibility of overcoming the moral objection against punishment of people for sins they have not committed.

It will suffice to mention here that, with reference to Joshua vii. 24, 25, the Rabbis asked the question, If he

(Achan) sinned, what justification could there be for putting his sons and daughters to death? And by the force of this argument they interpreted the words of the Scriptures to mean that the children of the criminal were only compelled to be present at the execution of their father.

Such passages, therefore, as would imply that children have to suffer for the sins of their parents are explained by the Rabbis as referring to cases in which the children perpetuate the crimes of their fathers.¹¹ The view of R. José, which I have already quoted, had, therefore, to be dropped, and another version in the name of the same Rabbi is accepted. According to this theory the sufferer is a person either "entirely wicked" or "not perfectly righteous," whilst the prosperous man is a person either "perfectly righteous," or "not entirely wicked."

It is hardly necessary to say that there is still something wanting to supplement this view, for the given classification would place the not entirely wicked on the same level with the perfectly righteous, and on a much higher level than the imperfectly righteous, who are undoubtedly far superior. The following passage may be regarded as supplying this missing something:—"The wicked who have done some good work are as amply rewarded for it in *this* world as if they were men who have fulfilled the whole of the Torah, so that they may be punished for their sins in the next world (without interruption); whilst the righteous who have committed some sin have to suffer for it (in this world) as if "they were men who burned the Law," so that they may enjoy their reward in the world to come (without interruption)." ¹² Thus the real retribution takes place in the next world, the fleeting existence on earth not being the fit time either to compensate right-

eousness or to punish sin. But as, on the one hand, God never allows "that the merit of any creature should be cut short," whilst, on the other hand, He deals very severely with the righteous, punishing them for the slightest transgression; since, too, this reward and punishment are only of short duration, they must take place in this short terrestrial existence. There is thus established a sort of divine economy, lest the harmony of the next world should be disturbed.

Yet another objection to the doctrine under discussion remains to be noticed. It is that it justifies God by accusing man, declaring every sufferer as more or less of a sinner. But such a notion, if carried to its last consequences, must result in tempting us to withhold our sympathies from him. And, indeed, it would seem that there were some non-Jewish philosophers who argued in this way. Thus a certain Roman official is reported to have said to R. Akiba, "How can you be so eager in helping the poor? Suppose only a king, who, in his wrath against his slave, were to set him in the gaol, and give orders to withhold from him food and drink; if, then, one dared to act to the contrary, would not the king be angry with him?"¹³ There is some appearance of logic in this notion put into the mouth of a heathen. The Rabbis, however, were inconsistent people, and responded to the appeal which suffering makes to every human heart without asking too many questions. Without entering here into the topic of charity in the Rabbinic literature, which would form a very interesting chapter, I shall only allude now to the following incident, which would show that the Rabbis did not abandon even those afflicted with leprosy, which, according to their own

notion, given above, followed only as a punishment for the worst crimes. One Friday, we are told, when the day was about to darken, the Chassid Abba Tachnah was returning home, bearing on his shoulders the baggage that contained all his fortune; he saw a leprous man lying on the road, who addressed him: "Rabbi, do me a deed of charity and take me into the town." The Rabbi now thought, "If I leave my baggage, where shall I find the means of obtaining subsistence for myself and my family? But if I forsake this leprous man I shall commit a mortal sin." In the end, he allowed the good inclination to prevail over the evil one, and first carried the sufferer to the town.¹⁴ The only practical conclusion that the Rabbis drew from such theories as identify suffering with sin were for the sufferer himself, who otherwise might be inclined to blame Providence, or even to blaspheme, but would now look upon his affliction as a reminder from heaven that there is something wrong in his moral state. Thus we read in tractate *Berachoth*:¹⁵ "If a man sees that affliction comes upon him, he ought to inquire into his actions, as it is said, Let us search and try our ways, and turn again to the Lord (Lam. iii. 40)." This means to say that the sufferer will find that he has been guilty of some offence. As an illustration of this statement we may perhaps consider the story about R. Huna, occurring in the same tractate.¹⁶ Of this Rabbi it is said that he once experienced heavy pecuniary losses, whereupon his friends came to his house and said to him, "Let the master but examine his conduct a little closer." On this R. Huna answered, "Do you suspect me of having committed some misdeed?" His friends rejoined, "And do you think that God would pass judgment with-

out justice?" R. Huna then followed their hint, and found that he did not treat his tenant farmer so generously as he ought. He offered redress, and all turned out well in the end. Something similar is to be found in the story of the martyrdom of R. Simeon ben Gamaliel and R. Ishmael ben Elisha. Of these Rabbis we are told that on their way to be executed the one said to the other, "My heart leaves me, for I am not aware of a sin deserving such a death"; on which the other answered, "It might have happened that in your function as judge you sometimes—for your own convenience—were slow in administering justice."¹⁷

But even if the personal actions of the righteous were blameless, there might still be sufficient ground for his being afflicted and miserable. This may be found in his relations to his kind and surroundings, or, to use the term now more popular, by reason of human solidarity. Now, after the above remarks on the objections entertained by the Rabbis against a man's being punished for the sins of others, it is hardly necessary to say that their idea of solidarity has little in common with the crude notions of it current in very ancient times. Still, it can hardly be doubted that the relation of the individual to the community was more keenly felt by the Rabbis than by the leaders in any other society, modern or ancient. According to the view given by an ancient Rabbi whose name is unknown, it would, indeed, seem that to them the individual was not simply a member of the Jewish commonwealth, or a co-religionist, but a limb of the great and single body "Israel," and that as such he communicated both for good and evil the sensations of the one part to the whole. In the *Midrash*, where a parallel is to be found to this idea, the responsi-

bility of the individual towards the community is further illustrated by R. Simeon ben Yochai, in the following way : "It is," we read there, "to be compared to people sitting on board a ship, one of the passengers of which took an awl and began to bore holes in the bottom of the vessel. Asked to desist from his dangerous occupation, he answered, 'Why, I am only making holes on my own seat,' forgetting that when the water came in it would sink the whole ship." Thus the sin of a single man might endanger the whole of humanity. It was in conformity with the view of his father that R. Eliezer, the son of R. Simeon (ben Yochai) said, "The world is judged after the merits or demerits of the majority, so that a single individual by his good or bad actions can decide the fate of his fellow-creatures, as it may happen that he is just the one who constitutes this majority."¹⁸ Nor does this responsibility cease with the man's own actions. According to the Rabbis man is responsible even for the conduct of others—and as such liable to punishment—if he is indifferent to the wrong that is being perpetrated about him, whilst an energetic protest from his side could have prevented it. And the greater the man the greater is his responsibility. He may suffer for the sins of his family which is first reached by his influence ; he may suffer for the sins of the whole community if he could hope to find a willing ear among them, and he may even suffer for the sins of the whole world if his influence extend so far, and he forbear from exerting it for good.¹⁹ Thus the possibility is given that the righteous man may suffer with justice, though he himself has never committed any transgression.

As a much higher aspect of this solidarity—and as may have already suggested itself to the reader from the pas-

sage cited above from the anonymous Rabbi—we may regard the suffering of the righteous as an atonement for the sins of their contemporaries. “When there will be neither Tabernacle nor the Holy Temple,” Moses is said to have asked God, “what will become of Israel?” Whereupon God answers, “I will take from among them the righteous man whom I shall consider as pledged for them, and will forgive all their sins;” the death of the perfect man, or even his suffering being looked upon as an expiation for the shortcoming of his generation.²⁰

It is hardly necessary to remind the reader of the affinity of this idea with that of sacrifices in general, as in both cases it is the innocent being which has to suffer for the sins of another creature. But there is one vital point which makes all the difference. It is that in our case the suffering is not enforced, but is a voluntary act on the part of the sacrifice, and is even desired by him. Without entering here on the often-discussed theme of the suffering of the Messiah, I need only mention the words of R. Ishmael who, on a very slight provocation, exclaimed, “I am the atonement for the Jews,” which means that he took upon him all their sins to suffer for them.²¹ This desire seems to have its origin in nothing else than a deep sympathy and compassion with Israel. To suffer *for*, or, at least *with* Israel was, according to the Rabbis, already the ideal of Moses. He is said, indeed, to have broken the Two Tables with the purpose of committing some sin, so that he would have either to be condemned together with Israel (for the sin of the golden calf), or to be pardoned together with them.²² And this conduct was expected not only from the leaders of Israel, but almost from every Jew. “When Israel is in a state of affliction (as, for instance, famine) one

must not say, I will rather live by myself, and eat and drink, and peace be unto thee, my soul. To those who do so the words of the Scriptures are to be applied : And in that day did the Lord God of Hosts call to weeping and to mourning, . . . and behold joy and gladness. . . . Surely this iniquity shall not be purged out from you till ye die " (Is. xxii. 12-14). Another passage is to the effect that, when a man shows himself indifferent to the suffering of the community, there come the two angels (who accompany every Jew), put their hands on his head, and say, " This man who has separated himself shall be excluded from their consolations." ²³

We might now characterise this sort of suffering as the chastisement of love (of the righteous) to mankind, or rather to Israel. But we must not confuse it with the Chastisement of Love often mentioned in the Talmud, though this idea also seems calculated to account for the suffering of the righteous. Here the love is not on the side of the sufferer, but proceeds from him who inflicts this suffering. " Him," says R. Huna, " in whom God delights he crushes with suffering." As a proof of this theory the words of Is. liii. 10 are given, which are interpreted to mean : him whom the Lord delights in He puts to grief. Another passage, by the same authority, is to the effect that where there is no sufficient cause for punishment (the man being entirely free from sin), we have to regard his suffering as a chastisement of love, for it is said : " Whom the Lord loveth He correcteth " (Proverbs iii. 11). ²⁴ To what purpose He corrects him may, perhaps, be seen from the following passage : " R. Eleazar ben Jacob says : If a man is visited by affliction he has to be thankful to God for it : for suffering draws man to, and

reconciles him with God, as it is said: For whom God loveth he correcteth." ²⁵

It is in conformity with such a high conception that affliction, far from being dreaded, becomes almost a desirable end, and we hear many Rabbis exclaim, "Beloved is suffering," for by it fatherly love is shown to man by God; by it man obtains purification and atonement, by it Israel came in possession of the best gifts, such as the Torah, the Holy Land, and eternal life.²⁶ And so also the sufferer, far from being considered as a man with a suspected past, becomes an object of veneration, on whom the glory of God rests, and he brings salvation to the world if he bears his affliction with joyful submission to the will of God.²⁷ Continuous prosperity is by no means to be longed after, for, as R. Ishmael taught, "He who has passed forty days without meeting adversity has already received his (share of the) world (to come) in this life."²⁸ Nay, the standing rule is that the really righteous suffer, whilst the wicked are supposed to be in a prosperous state. Thus, R. Jannai said, "We (average people) enjoy neither the prosperity of the wicked nor the afflictions of the righteous," ²⁹ whilst his contemporary, Rab, declared that he who experiences no affliction and persecution does not belong to them (the Jews).³⁰

2. The second main view on Retribution is that recorded by the Rabbis as in direct opposition to that of R. Ammi. It is that there is suffering as well as death without sin and transgression. We may now just as well infer that there is prosperity and happiness without preceding merits. And this is, indeed, the view held by R. Meir. For in contradiction to the view cited above, R. Meir declares that the request of Moses to have

explained to him the mysterious ways of Providence was *not* granted, and the answer he received was, "And I will shew mercy on whom I will shew mercy" (Exod. xxxiii. 19), which means to say, even though he to whom the mercy is shown be unworthy of it. The old question arises how such a procedure is to be reconciled with the justice and omnipotence of God. The commentaries try to evade the difficulty by suggesting some of the views given above, as that the real reward and punishment are only in the world to come, or that the affliction of the righteous is only chastisement of love, and so on. From the passages I am about to quote, however, one gains the impression that some Rabbis rather thought that this great problem will indeed not bear discussion or solution at all. Thus we have the legend: "The angels said to God, why have you punished Adam with death? He answered, On account of his having transgressed my commandment (with regard to the eating of the tree of knowledge). But why had Moses and Aaron to die? The reply given to them is the words, Eccl. ix. 2: 'All things come alike to all; there is one event to the righteous and to the wicked, to the good and to the clean and to the unclean.'" ³¹ Another legend records, "When Moses ascended to heaven, God showed him also the great men of futurity. R. Akiba was sitting and interpreting the law in a most wonderful way. Moses said to God: Thou hast shown me his worth, show me also his reward; on which he is bidden to look back. There he perceives him dying the most cruel of deaths, and his flesh being sold by weight. Moses now asks: Is this the reward of such a life? whereupon God answers him: Be silent; this I have determined." ³²

It is impossible not to think of the fine lines of the German poet:—

Warum schleppt sich blutend, elend,
 Unter Kreuzlast der Gerechte,
 Während glücklich als ein Sieger
 Trabt auf hohem Ross der Schlechte?

* * * * *
 Also fragen wir beständig,
 Bis man uns mit einer Handvoll
 Erde endlich stopft die Mäuler—
 Aber ist das eine Antwort?

Still, one might perhaps suggest that these passages when examined a little closer, not only contain a rebuke to man's importunity in wanting to intrude into the secrets of God, but also hint at the possibility that even God's omnipotence is submitted to a certain law—though designed by His own holy will—which He could not alter without detriment to the whole creation. Indeed, in one of the mystical accounts of the martyrdom of R. Akiba and other great Rabbis, God is represented as asking the sufferers to accept His hard decree without protest, unless they wish Him to destroy the whole world. In another place again, we read of a certain renowned Rabbi, who lived in great poverty, that once in a dream he asked the divine Shechinah how long he would have still to endure this bitter privation? The answer given to him was: "My son, will it please you that I destroy the world for your sake?"³⁸ It is only in this light that we shall be able to understand such passages in the Rabbinic literature as that God almost suffers Himself when He has to inflict punishment either on the individual or on whole communities. Thus God is represented as mourning for

seven days (as in the case when one loses a child) before He brought the deluge on the world; He bemoans the fall of Israel and the destruction of the Temple, and the Shechinah laments even when the criminal suffers his just punishment. And it is not by rebelling against these laws that He tries to redeem His suffering. He himself has recourse to prayer, and says: "May it be my will that my mercy conquer my wrath, that my love over-rule my strict justice, so that I may treat my children with love."³⁴ If now man is equal to God, he has nevertheless, or rather on that account, to submit to the law of God without any outlook for reward or punishment; or, as Antigonos expressed it, "Be not as slaves that minister to the Lord with a view to receive recompense."³⁵ Certainly it would be hazardous to maintain that Antigonos's saying was a consequence of this doctrine; but, at any rate, we see a clear tendency to keep the thought of reward (in spite of the prominent part it holds in the Bible) out of view. Still more clearly is it seen when, with reference to Ps. cxii., "Blessed is the man . . . that delighteth greatly in his commandments," Rabbi Eleazar remarks that the meaning is that the man desires only to do His commandments, but he does not want the rewards connected with them.³⁶ This is the more remarkable, as the whole contents of this psalm are nothing else than a long series of promises of various rewards, so that the explanation of Rabbi Eleazar is in almost direct contradiction to the simple meaning of the words. On the other hand, also, every complaint about suffering must cease. Not only is affliction no direct chastisement by God in the way of revenge; but even when it would seem to us that we suffer innocently, we have no right to murmur, as

God himself is also suffering, and, as the Talmud expresses it, 'It is enough for the slave to be in the position of his master.' " ³⁷

This thought of the compassion — in its strictest sense of fellow-suffering — of God with His creatures becomes a new motive for avoiding sin. "Woe to the wicked," exclaims a Rabbi, "who by their bad actions turn the mercy of God into strict justice." ³⁸ And the later mystics explain distinctly that the great crime of sin consists in causing pain, so to speak, to the Shechinah. One of them compared it with the slave who abuses the goodness of his master so far as to buy with his money arms to wound him. But, on the other hand, it becomes, rather inconsistently, also a new source of comfort; for, in the end, God will have to redeem Himself from this suffering, which cannot be accomplished so long as Israel is still under punishment. ³⁹ Most interesting is the noble prayer by a Rabbi of a very late mystical school: "O God, speedily bring about the redemption. I am not in the least thinking of what I may gain by it. I am willing to be condemned to all tortures in hell, if only the Shechinah will cease to suffer." ⁴⁰

If we were now to ask for the attitude of the Synagogue towards these two main views, we should have to answer that — as already hinted at the opening of this paper — it never decided for the one or the other. R. David Rocca Martino dared even to write a whole book in Defence of Adam proving that he committed no sin in eating the fruit of the tree of knowledge against the literal sense of the Scriptures, which were also taken by the Rabbis literally. ⁴¹ By this he destroyed the prospects of many a theodicy, but it is not known to me that he was severely

rebuked for it. It has been said by a great writer that the best theology is that which is not consistent, and this advantage the theology of the Synagogue possesses to its utmost extent. It accepted with R. Ammi the stern principle of divine retribution, in as far as it makes man feel the responsibility of his actions, and makes suffering a discipline. But it never allowed this principle to be carried so far as to deny the sufferer our sympathy, and by a series of conscious and unconscious modifications, he passed from the state of a sinner into the zenith of the saint and the perfectly righteous man. But, on the other hand, the Synagogue also gave entrance to the very opposite view which, abandoning every attempt to account for suffering, bids man do his duty without any hope of reward, even as God also does His. Hence the remarkable phenomenon in the works of later Jewish moralists, that, whilst they never weary of the most detailed accounts of the punishments awaiting the sinner and the rewards in store for the righteous, they warn us most emphatically that our actions must not be guided by these unworthy considerations, and that our only motive should be the love of God and submission to His holy will.

Nor must it be thought that the views of the Rabbis are so widely divergent from those enunciated in the Bible. The germ of almost all the later ideas is already to be found in the Scriptures. It only needed the process of time to bring into prominence those features which proved at a later period most acceptable. Indeed, it would seem that there is also a sort of domestication of religious ideas. On their first association with man there is a certain rude violence about them which, when left to the management of untutored minds, would cer-

tainly do great harm. But, let only this association last for centuries, during which these ideas have to be subdued by practical use, and they will, in due time, lose their former roughness, will become theologically workable, and turn out the greatest blessing to inconsistent humanity.

IX

THE LAW AND RECENT CRITICISM¹

PROFESSOR TOY's work, *Judaism and Christianity*, gives an admirable conspectus of the results of the modern critical school in their bearing on the genesis of Christianity. The author takes various important doctrines of Christianity, traces them back to their origin in Israelitism, pursues their course through their various phases in Judaism, until they reach their final development in the teaching of Jesus and His disciples, which, in the author's judgment, is the consummation of that which the prophets and their successors had to give to the world. Laying so much stress as Professor Toy does on the saying, "By their fruits shall ye know them," he ought also, perhaps, to have told us what, in the course of time, has become of these several doctrines. For when, for instance, with regard to the doctrine of original sin, he remarks that "in certain systems of Christian theology the human race is involved in the condemnation of the first man" (p. 185, *n.* 1); or that, in the New Testament, "the demand for a mediating power between God and humanity is pushed to the farthest point which thought can occupy consistently with the maintenance of the absoluteness of the one Supreme Deity" (p. 121), he is rather evading a difficulty than answering it. Such elaboration would, however, have been outside

the scope of Professor Toy's book, which claims only to be a sketch of the progress of thought from the Old Testament to the New. For his own solution of the indicated difficulty, Toy, to judge from his liberal standpoint, would probably refer us to Dr. Hatch's Hibbert lectures; the issue of such an appeal must, I imagine, remain for long doubtful and disputed.

A delightful characteristic of Toy's book is its transparent clearness and sobriety, which will make it interesting reading, even to those who are acquainted with the writer's authorities in their original sources. Almost entirely new, as well as most suggestive, is the justice which Toy does to the law in recognising it as a factor for good in the history of religion. In this point Toy is not only up to his date, but beyond it. It is true that even the Pharisees have made some advance in the estimation of the liberal school. They are no longer condemned *en masse* as so many hypocrites. It is even admitted that there were a few honest men among them, such as Rabban Gamaliel, the teacher of Paul, or R. Akiba, the patriot of Bethar. We are now too polite to be personal. But with regard to the law, on the other hand, there is at present a markedly opposite tendency. The general idea seems to be that, as the doctrine of the resurrection of Christ must be loosely interpreted in a spiritual sense, it must logically have been preceded by a universal spiritual death, and the germs of the disease which brought this death about are to be sought for in the law. Hence the strained efforts to discover in the law the source of all religious evil, — cant, hypocrisy, formalism, externalism, transcendentalism, and as many "isms" more, of bad reputation.

It was probably with this current representation of the law in view that Toy, when speaking of the Levitical legislation, and of its fixing "men's minds on ceremonial details which, in some cases, it put into the same category and on the same level with moral duties," asks the question: "Would there not thence result a dimming of the moral sense and a confusion of moral distinctions? The ethical attitude of a man who could regard a failure in the routine of sacrifice as not less blameworthy than an act of theft cannot be called a lofty one" (p. 186). The answer which he gives is more favourable than such a leading question would induce us to expect. He tells us that, "in point of fact, the result was different" (*ibid*). "The Levitical law is not to be looked on as a mere extension and organisation of the ritual. . . . Its ritual was, in great part, the organised expression of the consciousness of sin" (p. 226). Of the law in general Toy says that it had "larger consequences than its mere details would suggest," for it "cultivated the moral sense of the people into results above its mechanical prescriptions," and "it developed the sense of sin, as Paul points out" (Gal. iii. 19), "and therewith a freer feeling, which brought the soul into more immediate contact with God" (p. 227); whilst in another place he reminds us "that much of the law is moral, and that no one could fail to see a spiritual significance beneath its letter" (p. 245), and he even admits that "the great legal schools which grew up in the second century, if we may judge by the sayings of the teachers which have come down to us, did not fail to discriminate between the outward and the inward, the ceremonial and the moral" (p. 186).

These and similar passages will suffice to show that

Toy's estimate of the law is a very different one from that of Smend and his school. However, it must not be supposed that he is not on the look-out for the germs of the disease. He must find these germs somewhere, or else the progress, which his book is intended to illustrate, would be difficult to detect. And thus he repeats the old accusations, though not without modification.

Professor Toy's objections may, perhaps, be summed up in the passage in which he represents the Jewish law as "an attempt to define all the beliefs and acts of life" (p. 239), or as "the embodiment of devotion to a fixed rule of belief and conduct" (p. 237). Toy does not entirely condemn this system, and even speaks of it as a "lofty attempt" (p. 239); but, on the whole, he considers that it must have resulted in bad theology, as well as in doubtful conduct. Without following Professor Toy over the whole area of his investigations, which would require a volume for itself, I will only take the opportunity of making a few general remarks upon the nature and character of this legal system, which seems to hold the key to the spiritual history of Judaism.

First, as to its theology, Toy's description of the law as an attempt to define all the *beliefs* of life—an assertion which is also made by Schürer—is not wholly accurate. For such an attempt was never made by Judaism. The few dogmas which Judaism possesses, such as the Existence of God, Providence, Reward, and Punishment—without which no revealed religion is conceivable—can hardly be called a creed in the modern sense of the term, which implies something external and foreign to man's own knowledge, and received only in deference to the weight of authority. To the Jew of the Christian era,

these simpler dogmas were so self-evident that it would have cost him the greatest effort *not* to believe them. Hence the fact that, whilst there have come down to us so many controverted points between the Sadducees and Pharisees with regard to certain juristic and ritual questions, we know of only one of an essentially dogmatic character, viz. the dispute concerning the Resurrection.

It is thus difficult to imagine to what Professor Toy can be alluding when he speaks of the "interest they (the Jews) threw into the discussion and determination of *minutiæ* of faith" (p. 241). Discussions upon *minutiæ* of faith are only to be read in the works of the later schoolmen (as Saadiah, Maimonides and their followers), in which such subtle problems as *Creatio ex nihilo*, the origin of evil, predestination, free will and similar subjects are examined; but this period is very distant from that with which Toy is concerned. The older schools and the so-called houses of Shammai and Hillel, most of whose members were the contemporaries of the Apostles, show very little predilection for such *minutiæ*. Their discussions and differences of opinion about ritual matters are very numerous, scattered as they are over the whole of the ancient Rabbinic literature, but I can only remember two of a metaphysical character, or touching upon the *minutiæ* of faith. The one, dealing with the efficacy of certain sacrifices, discusses whether it only extends to the remission of the pending punishment for sins, or also includes their purification and washing away; the other considers the question whether it would not have been better for man not to have been created.² But this latter controversy, which is said to have lasted for two years and a half, by no means led to any big metaphysical or

theological system, but only to the practical advice that, as we have been created, we ought to be watchful over our conduct. It is, indeed, a noteworthy feature of Judaism that theological speculations have never resulted in the formulation of any imposing or universal doctrine, but usually in divers ceremonial practices. To give one illustration: according to Professor Toy (p. 210) the conclusion which the author of 1 Tim. ii. 11-14 draws from the fact that woman was the immediate agent of the introduction of sin was the subordination of her sex. The Rabbis also noticed the same fact, and in their less abstract language speak of woman as having brought death and grief into the world; but the conclusion which they drew was that since woman had extinguished the "light of the world," she ought to atone for it by lighting the candles for the Sabbath.³ Nor is Toy quite correct when he maintains that the conception of the Memra as Creator and Lord, etc., and as "representative of the immediate divine activity," did not keep its hold on Jewish thought, having been discarded in the later literature (p. 104). For the Shechinah of the Talmud, the *Metatron*⁴ of the Gaonic-mystical literature, the Active Intelligence of the philosophical schools, as well as the Ten Sephiroth⁵ (Emanations) of the Cabbalists, all owe their existence to the same theosophic scruples and subtleties in which the Logos of Philo and the Memra⁶ of the Targums originated. Thus, they always kept — though under various forms — their hold on the Jewish mind. Judaism was always broad enough to accommodate itself to these formulæ, which for the one may mean the most holy mysteries, and for the other empty and meaningless catchwords. The objection — in fact, the active opposition — of the Synagogue began when

these possible or impossible explanations of the universe tended to transgress the bounds of abstract speculation, and, passing over into real concrete beings, to be worshipped as such. An instance from comparatively modern times might be found in one of the vagaries of the followers of the Pseudo-Messiah, Shabbethai Tsebi. For many generations the controversy had raged among the Cabbalists, whether the first of the above-mentioned Ten Emanations (called by some *Original Adam*, by others, *Crown*⁷) is to be considered as a part of the Deity or as something separate, and so to speak, having a reality in itself. The danger of establishing a Being near the Deity, having an existence of its own and invested with divine attributes, could not have escaped the thoughtful, and there are indeed some indications to this effect. The Synagogue as such, however, remained during the whole controversy strictly neutral, and allowed these theosophists to fight in the air as much as they liked. But the moment that the sect of Shabbethai Tsebi identified the incarnate Original Adam with their leader, and worshipped him as a sort of God-Messiah, the Synagogue at once took up a hostile attitude against those who separated God from His world, and, declaring Shabbethai Tsebi and his followers to be apostates, excluded them from Judaism for ever.

Nor can it be proved that legalism or nomism has ever tended to suppress the spiritual side of religion, either in respect of consciousness of sin, or of individual love and devotion. With an equal logic quite the opposite might be argued. Professor Toy tells us himself that it is no "accident that along with this more definite expression of ethical-religious law we find the first traces of a more

spiritual conception of righteousness in the 'new heart' of Jeremiah and Ezekiel" (p. 235), whilst in another passage we read that "a turning point is marked by the Deuteronomist Jeremiah and Ezekiel, who announce the principles of individual responsibility and inwardness of obedience" (p. 184). Now, two things are certain; first, that Ezekiel urges the necessity of the new heart as well as of individual responsibility more keenly than any of his predecessors; secondly, that in Ezekiel the legalistic tendency is more evident than in Deuteronomy and Jeremiah. The logical conclusion would thus be that the higher ideals of religion are not only not inconsistent with legalism, but are the very outcome of it, and the so-called Priestly Code, by the very fact of its markedly legalistic tendency, should be considered as a step in the right direction. The latter assertion sounds like a paradox, but it will seem less so when the prevailing characteristic of this portion of the Pentateuch, as given even by Kuenen, who is by no means a champion of the Law, is borne in mind. "The centre of gravity," according to the great Dutch critic, "lies for the priestly author elsewhere than for the prophet; it lies in man's attitude, not towards his fellow-men, but towards God; not in his social, but in his personal life" (*Hibbert Lectures*, p. 161). It is here that we seem to strike the keynote of the *Weltanschauung* of the Priestly Legislation. In it man is more than a social being. He has also an individual life of his own, his joys and sorrows, his historical claims, his traditions of the past, and his hopes for the future—and all these have to be brought under the influence of religion, and to become sanctified through their relation to God. Hence, the work of the Priestly narrator and legislator opens with a cosmogony of his

own, in which we find the grand theological idea of man being created in the Divine image; hence, too, his religious conception of the history of the nation and the control claimed by him over all the details of human life, which became with him so many opportunities for the worship of God. To him, God is not a mere figurehead; He not only reigns, but governs. Everywhere,—in the temple, in the judge's seat, in the family, in the farm, and in the market-place,—His presence is felt in enforcing the laws bearing His *imprimatur*, "I am the Lord thy God." By thus diffusing religion over the whole domain of human life—not confining it to the social institutions which are represented only by a few personages, such as the king, the princes, the priests, the judges or elders—they made it the common good of the whole people, and the feeling of personal responsibility for this good became much deeper than before. Thus it came to pass that whilst, during the first temple, the apostasy of kings and aristocracy involved the entire people, so that the words "And he (the king) did evil in the sight of the Lord," embrace the whole nation, during the second temple it was no longer of much consequence which side the political leaders took. Both during the Hellenistic persecutions, as well as afterwards in the struggles of some Maccabean kings with the Pharisees, the bulk of the people showed that they considered religion as their own personal affair, not to be regulated by the conscience of either priest or prince. It is true that this success may be largely ascribed to such contemporary religious factors as the Synagogue with its minimum of form, the Scribes with their activity as teachers, and the Psalmists with their divine enthusiasm; but the very circumstance that

these factors arose and flourished under the influence of the Priestly Code would suffice to prove that its tendency was not so sacerdotal as some writers would have us believe. Jewish tradition indeed attributes the composition of the daily public prayers, as well as of others for private worship, to the very men whom modern biblical criticism holds responsible for the introduction of the Priestly Code. Now this fact may perhaps be disputed, but there is little doubt that the age in which these prayers were composed was one of flourishing legalism. Nor is there any proof that the synagogues and their ritual were in opposition to the temple. From the few documents belonging to this period, it is clear that there was no opposition to the legalistic spirit by which the Priestly Code was actuated. This would prove that legalism meant something more than tithes and sacrifices for the benefit of the priests.

Nor is it true that the legal tendency aimed at narrowing the mind of the nation, turning all its thoughts into the one direction of the law. Apart from the fact that the Torah contained other elements besides its legalism, the prophets were not forgotten, but were read and interpreted from a very early age. It was under the predominance of the Law that the Wisdom literature was composed, which is by no means narrow or one-sided, but is even supposed by some critics to contain many foreign elements. In the book of Job, the great problems of man's existence are treated with a depth and grandeur never equalled before or since. This book alone ought partly to compensate the modern school for the disappearance of prophecy, which is usually brought as a charge against the Law. Then, too, the Psalms, placed by the same school in the post-

exilic period, are nothing but another aspect of prophecy, with this difference, perhaps, that in the Prophets God speaks to man, while in the Psalms it is man who establishes the same communion by speaking to God. There is no reason why the critical school, with its broad conception of inspiration, and with its insistence that prophecy does *not* mean prediction, should so strongly emphasise this difference. If "it is no longer as in the days of Amos, when the Lord Yahveh did nothing without revealing his counsel to his servants the prophets," there is in the days of the Psalmists nothing in man's heart, no element in his longings and meditations and aspirations, which was not revealed to God. Nay, it would seem that at times the Psalmist hardly ever desires the revelation of God's secrets. Let future events be what they may, he is content, for he is with God. After all his trials, he exclaims, "And yet I am continually with thee; thou hast taken hold of my right hand. According to thy purpose wilt thou lead me, and afterwards receive me with glory. Whom have I (to care for) in heaven? and possessing thee, I have pleasure in nothing upon earth. Though my flesh and my heart should have wasted away, God would for ever be the rock of my heart and my portion" (Ps. lxxiii. 23-26). How an age producing a literature containing passages like these — of which Wellhausen in his *Abriß* (p. 95) justly remarks, that we are not worthy even to repeat them — can be considered by the modern school as wanting in intimate relation to God and inferior to that of the prophets is indeed a puzzle.

Now a few words as to the actual life under the Law. Here, again, there is a fresh puzzle. On the one side, we hear the opinions of so many learned professors, proclaim-

ing *ex cathedrâ*, that the Law was a most terrible burden, and the life under it the most unbearable slavery, deadening body and soul. On the other side we have the testimony of a literature extending over about twenty-five centuries, and including all sorts and conditions of men, scholars, poets, mystics, lawyers, casuists, schoolmen, tradesmen, workmen, women, simpletons, who all, from the author of the 119th Psalm to the last pre-Mendelssohnian writer—with a small exception which does not even deserve the name of a vanishing minority—give unanimous evidence in favour of this Law, and of the bliss and happiness of living and dying under it,—and this, the testimony of people who were actually living under the Law, not merely theorising upon it, and who experienced it in all its difficulties and inconveniences. The Sabbath will give a fair example. The law of the Sabbath is one of those institutions the strict observance of which was already the object of attack in early New Testament times. Nevertheless, the doctrine proclaimed in one of the Gospels—that the son of man is Lord also of the Sabbath—was also current among the Rabbis. They, too, taught that the Sabbath had been delivered into the hand of man (to break, if necessary), and not man delivered over to the Sabbath.⁸ And they even laid down the axiom that a scholar who lived in a town, where among the Jewish population there could be the least possibility of doubt as to whether the Sabbath might be broken for the benefit of a dangerously sick person, was to be despised as a man neglecting his duty; for, as Maimonides points out, the laws of the Torah are not meant as an infliction upon mankind, “but as mercy, loving-kindness, and peace.”⁹

The attacks upon the Jewish Sabbath have not abated

with the lapse of time. The day is still described by almost every Christian writer on the subject in the most gloomy colours, and long lists are given of minute and easily transgressed observances connected with it, which, instead of a day of rest, would make it to be a day of sorrow and anxiety, almost worse than the Scotch Sunday as depicted by continental writers. But it so happens that we have the prayer of R. Zadok, a younger contemporary of the Apostles, which runs thus: "Through the love with which Thou, O Lord our God, lovest Thy people Israel, and the mercy which Thou hast shown to the children of Thy covenant, Thou hast given unto us in love this great and holy Seventh Day."¹⁰ And another Rabbi, who probably flourished in the first half of the second century, expresses himself (with allusion to Exod. xxxi. 13: Verily my Sabbaths ye shall keep . . . that ye may know that I am the Lord that doth sanctify you)—"The Holy One, blessed be He, said unto Moses, I have a good gift in my treasures, and Sabbath is its name, which I wish to present to Israel. Go and bring to them the good tidings."¹¹ The form again of the Blessing over the Sanctification-cup¹²—a ceremony known long before the destruction of the Second Temple—runs: "Blessed art Thou, O Lord our God, who hast sanctified us by Thy commandments, and hast taken pleasure in us, and in love and grace hast given us Thy holy Sabbath as an inheritance." All these Rabbis evidently regarded the Sabbath as a gift from heaven, an expression of the infinite mercy and grace of God which He manifested to His beloved children.

And the gift was, as already said, a *good* gift. Thus the Rabbis paraphrase the words in the Scripture "See,

for that the Lord hath given you the Sabbath" (Exod. xvi. 29): God said unto Israel behold the gem I gave you, My children I gave you the Sabbath for your good. Sanctify or honour the Sabbath by choice meals, beautiful garments; delight your soul with pleasure and I will reward you (for this very pleasure); as it is said: "And if thou wilt call the Sabbath a delight and the holy of the Lord honourable (that is honouring the Sabbath in this way) . . . then shalt thou delight thyself in the Lord" (Is. lviii. 13, 14).¹³

The delight of the Sabbath was keenly felt. Israel fell in love with the Sabbath, and in the hyperbolic language of the Agadah the Sabbath is personified as the "Bride of Israel," whilst others called it "Queen Sabbath,"¹⁴ and they are actually jealous of a certain class of semi-proselytes who, as it seems, were willing to observe the Sabbath, but declined to submit to the covenant of Abraham. The Gentile Sabbath-keepers—who, like all the nations of the world, envy Israel their Sabbath—the Rabbis considered as shameless intruders deserving punishment.¹⁵ No, it was Israel's own Queen or Bride Sabbath whose appearance in all her heavenly glory they were impatiently awaiting. Thus we are told of R. Judah b. Ilai that when the eve of the Sabbath came "he made his ablutions, wrapped himself up in his white linen with fringed borders looking like an angel of the Lord of Hosts," thus prepared for the solemn reception of Queen Sabbath. Another Rabbi used to put on his best clothes, and arise and invite the Sabbath with the words: "Come in Bride, come in."¹⁶ What the Bride brought was peace and bliss. Nay, man is provided with a super soul for the Sabbath, enabling him to bear both the spiritual and the material delights of the day with

dignity and solemnity.¹⁷ The very light (or expression) of man's face is different on Sabbath, testifying to his inward peace and rest. And when man has recited his prayers (on the eve of the Sabbath) and thus borne testimony to God's creation of the world and to the glory of the Sabbath, there appear the two angels who accompany him, lay their hands on his head and impart to him their blessing with the words: "And thine iniquity is taken away and thy sin purged" (Is. vi. 7).¹⁸ For nothing is allowed to disturb the peace of the Sabbath; not even "the sorrows of sin," though the Sabbath had such a solemn effect on people that even the worldly man would not utter an untruth on the Day of the Lord. Hence it was not only forbidden to pray on Sabbath for one's own (material) needs, but everything in the liturgy of a mournful character (as for instance the confession of sin, supplication for pardon) was carefully avoided. It was with difficulty, as the Rabbis say, that they made an exception in the case of condoling with people who had suffered loss through the death of near relatives. There is no room for morbid sentiment on Sabbath, for the blessing of the Lord maketh rich, and He addeth no sorrow with it (Prov. x. 22).¹⁹ The burden of the Sabbath prayers is for peace, rest, sanctification, and joy (through salvation) and praise of God for this ineffable bliss of the Sabbath.

Such was the Sabbath of the old Rabbis and the same spirit continued through all ages. The Sabbath was and is still celebrated by the people who did and do observe it, in hundreds of hymns, which would fill volumes, as a day of rest and joy, of pleasure and delight, a day in which man enjoys some foretaste of the pure

bliss and happiness which are stored up for the righteous in the world to come. Somebody, either the learned professors, or the millions of the Jewish people, must be under an illusion. Which it is I leave to the reader to decide.

It is also an illusion to speak of the burden which a scrupulous care to observe six hundred and thirteen commandments must have laid upon the Jew. Even a superficial analysis will discover that in the time of Christ many of these commandments were already obsolete (as for instance those relating to the tabernacle and to the conquest of Palestine), while others concerned only certain classes, as the priests, the judges, the soldiers, the Nazirites, or the representatives of the community, or even only one or two individuals among the whole population, as the King and the High-Priest. Others, again, provided for contingencies which could occur only to a few, as for instance the laws concerning divorce or levirate marriages, whilst many—such as those concerning idolatry, and incest, and the sacrifice of children to Moloch—could scarcely have been considered as a practical prohibition by the pre-Christian Jew; just as little as we can speak of Englishmen as lying under the burden of a law preventing them from burning widows or marrying their grandmothers, though such acts would certainly be considered as crimes. Thus it will be found by a careful enumeration that barely a hundred laws remain which really concerned the life of the bulk of the people. If we remember that even these include such laws as belief in the unity of God, the necessity of loving and fearing Him, and of sanctifying His name, of loving one's neighbour and the stranger, of providing

for the poor, exhorting the sinner, honouring one's parents and many more of a similar character, it will hardly be said that the ceremonial side of the people's religion was not well balanced by a fair amount of spiritual and social elements. Besides, it would seem that the line between the ceremonial and the spiritual is too often only arbitrarily drawn. With many commandments it is rather a matter of opinion whether they should be relegated to the one category or the other.

Thus, the wearing of Tephillin²⁰ or phylacteries has, on the one hand, been continually condemned as a meaningless superstition, and a pretext for formalism and hypocrisy. But, on the other hand, Maimonides, who can in no way be suspected of superstition or mysticism, described their importance in the following words: "Great is the holiness of the Tephillin; for as long as they are on the arm and head of man he is humble and God-fearing, and feels no attraction for frivolity or idle things, nor has he any evil thoughts, but will turn his heart to the words of truth and righteousness." The view which R. Johanan, a Palestinian teacher of the third century, took of the fulfilment of the Law, will probably be found more rational than that of many a rationalist of to-day. Upon the basis of the last verse in Hosea, "The ways of the Lord are right, and the just shall walk in them, but the transgressors shall fall therein," he explains that while one man, for instance, eats his paschal lamb with the purpose of doing the will of God who commanded it, and thereby does an act of righteousness, another thinks only of satisfying his appetite by the lamb, so that his eating it (by the very fact that he professes at the same time to perform a relig-

ious rite) becomes a stumbling-block for him.²¹ Thus all the laws by virtue of their divine authority — and in this there was in the first century no difference of opinion between Jews and Christians — have their spiritual side, and to neglect them implies, at least from the individual's own point of view, a moral offence.

The legalistic attitude may be summarily described as an attempt to live in accordance with the will of God, caring less for what God is than for what He wants us to be. But, nevertheless, on the whole this life never degenerated into religious formalism. Apart from the fact that during the second temple there grew up laws, and even beliefs, which show a decided tendency towards progress and development, there were also ceremonies which were popular with the masses, and others which were neglected. Men were not, therefore, the mere soulless slaves of the Law; personal sympathies and dislikes also played a part in their religion. Nor were all the laws actually put upon the same level. With a happy inconsistency men always spoke of heavier and slighter sins, and by the latter — excepting, perhaps, the profanation of the Sabbath — they mostly understood ceremonial transgressions. The statement made by Professor Toy (p. 243), on the authority of James (ii. 10), that "the principle was established that he who offended in one point was guilty of all," is hardly correct; for the passage seems rather to be laying down a principle, or arguing that logically the law ought to be looked upon as a whole, than stating a fact. The fact was that people did not consider the whole law as of equal importance, but made a difference between laws and laws, and even spoke of certain commandments, such as those of charity and kindness, as outweighing all the rest of the

Torah. It was in conformity with this spirit that in times of great persecution the leaders of the people had no compunction in reducing the whole Law to the three prohibitions of idolatry, of incest, and of bloodshed. Only these three were considered of sufficient importance that men should rather become martyrs than transgress them.

These, then, are some of the illusions and misrepresentations which exist with regard to the Law. There are many others, of which the complete exposure would require a book by itself. Meanwhile, in the absence of such a book to balance and correct the innumerable volumes upon the other side, Professor Toy has done the best he could with existing materials, and produced a meritorious work deserving of wide recognition and approval.

X

THE HEBREW COLLECTION OF THE BRITISH MUSEUM

THE Hebrew collection in the British Museum forms one of the greatest centres of Jewish thought. It is only surpassed by the treasures which are contained in the Bodleian Library at Oxford. The fame of these magnificent collections has spread far and wide. It has penetrated into the remotest countries, and even the Bachurim (*alumni*) of some obscure place in Poland, who otherwise neither care nor know anything about British civilisation, have a dim notion of the nature of these mines of Jewish learning.

All sorts of legends circulate amongst them about the "millions" of books which belong to the "Queen of England." They speak mysteriously of an autograph copy of the Book of Proverbs, presented to the Queen of Sheba on the occasion of her visit to Jerusalem, and brought by the English troops as a trophy from their visit to Abyssinia, which is still ruled by the descendants of that famous lady. They also talk of a copy of the Talmud of Jerusalem which once belonged to Titus, afterwards to a Pope, was presented by the latter to a Russian Czar, and taken away from him by the English in the Crimean war; of a manu-

script of the book *Light is Sown*,¹ which is so large that no shelf can hold it, and which therefore hangs on iron chains. How they long to have a glance at these precious things! Would not a man get wiser only by looking at the autograph of the wisest of men?

But even the students of Germany and Austria, who are inaccessible to such fables, and by the aid of Zedner's, Steinschneider's, and Neubauer's catalogues have a fair notion of our libraries, cherish the belief that they would gain in scholarship and wisdom by examining these grand collections. How often have I been asked by Jewish students abroad: "Have you really been to the British Museum? Have you really seen this or that rare book or manuscript? Had you not great difficulties in seeing them? Is not the place where these heaps of jewels are treasured up always crowded by students and visitors?"

Yet how little does our English public know of these wonderful things! We are fairly interested in Græco-Roman art. We betray much curiosity about the different Egyptian dynasties. We look with admiration at the cuneiform inscriptions in the Nimrod room. We do not even grudge a glance at the abominable idols of the savage tribes. But as to the productions of Jewish genius, — well, it is best to quote here the words of Heine, who ridiculed this indifference to everything that is Jewish, in the following lines: —

Alte Mumien, ausgestopfte,
Pharaonen von Ägypten,
Merowinger Schattenkön'ge,
Ungepuderte Perücken,

Auch die Zopfmonarchen China's
Porzellanpagodenkaiser —

Alle lernen sie auswendig,
 Kluge Mädchen, aber, Himmel!

Fragt man sie nach grossen Namen,
 Aus dem grossen Goldzeitalter
 Der arabisch-althispanisch
 Jüdischen Poetenschule,

Fragt man nach dem Dreigestirn
 Nach Jehuda ben Halevy,
 Nach dem Salomon Gabirol
 Und dem Moses Iben Esra.

Fragt man nach dergleichen Namen,
 Dann mit grossen Augen schau'n
 Uns die Kleinen an — alsdann
 Stehn am Berge die Ochsinnen.

Now Heine goes on to advise his beloved one to study the Hebrew language. It would be indeed the best remedy against this indifference. But this is so radical a cure that one cannot hope that it will be made use of by many. A few remarks in English, trying to give some notion of the Hebrew collection in the British Museum, may, therefore, not be considered altogether superfluous.

The Hebrew collection in the Museum may be divided into two sections: Printed Books, and Manuscripts. The number of the printed books amounted in the year 1867, in which Zedner concluded his catalogue, to 10,100 volumes. Within the last twenty-eight years about 5000 more have been added.

This enormous collection has grown out of very small beginnings. The British Museum was first opened to the public in the year 1759. Amongst the 500,000 volumes which it possessed at that time only a single Jewish work, the *editio princeps* of the Talmud (Bomberg, Venice, 1520-

1523) was to be found on its shelves. According to an article by Zedner in the *Hebräische Bibliographie* (ii. p. 88), this copy of the Talmud once belonged to Henry VIII. But very soon the Museum was enriched by a small collection of Hebrew books, presented to it by Mr. Solomon da Costa, surnamed Athias, who had emigrated to England from Holland. The translation of the Hebrew letter with which the donor accompanied his present to the Trustees of the Museum was first published in the *Gentleman's Magazine*, February 1760, and was afterwards republished by the Rev. A. L. Green, in an article in the *Jewish Chronicle*, 1859. I shall only reproduce here the passage relating to the history of this collection. After expressing his gratitude to the "crowning city, the city of London, in which he dwelt for fifty-four years in ease and quietness and safety," and telling us that he bequeaths these books to the British nation as a token of his gratitude, Da Costa proceeds to say that they are 180 books, which had been gathered and bound for Charles II., with valuable bindings and marked with the king's own cipher. These books were intended as a present from the London Jewish community to Charles for certain privileges which he had bestowed on them. The sudden death of the king seems to have frustrated the intention of the first donors. The books were scattered, and Da Costa had to collect them again.

Small as this collection is, it is most valuable on account of its including many early editions of Venice, Constantinople, Naples, etc. The original letter of Da Costa, with a full list of the 180 books, is preserved in a MS. in the British Museum (Additional, 4710-11).

Of still greater importance is the Michaelis collection.

It consists of 4420 volumes, and was bought by the Trustees of the Museum in 1848. Other successive acquisitions, especially the purchase of a large number of printed books from the Almanzi collection, brought the Museum into possession of one of the most complete and one of the largest Hebrew libraries in the world.

After the foregoing remarks on the quantity of this collection, I shall now attempt to give some idea of its quality. The following table, taken from the Preface of Zedner's *Catalogue*, shows its manifold contents:—

1. Bibles	1260	8. Cabbalah	460
2. Commentaries on the Bible	510	9. Sermons	400
3. Talmud	730	10. Liturgies	1200
4. Commentaries on the Talmud	700	11. Divine Philosophy . .	690
5. Codes of Law	1260	12. Scientific works . . .	180
6. Decisions	520	13. Grammars, Dictionaries	450
7. Midrash	160	14. History, Geography .	320
		15. Poetry, Criticism . .	770

The reader can see that almost every branch of human thought, religious and secular, is amply represented in this collection. Looking at this table from a geographical point of view, we may perhaps classify the authors in the following way:—France and Germany in the Middle Ages, Poland and the East in modern times, are represented by the fourth, fifth, and sixth classes. The Rabbis of Spain and Italy would probably excel in the last five classes. In the productions of classes eight and nine all the before-mentioned countries would have an equal share. English Judaism, by reason of its large number of occasional prayers and wedding hymns (Zedner, pp. 472, 652), may perhaps be represented in the last class (criticism

excluded). We in England are a pious, devotional people, and leave the thinking to others.

But what is still more welcome to the student is the fact that all these branches of Jewish learning are represented in the British Museum by the best editions. It would be a rather tedious task to enumerate here all the early editions of which this collection can boast. There is hardly any Hebrew book of importance from the Bible down to the Code of R. Joseph Caro of which the Museum does not possess the first printed edition. There are also many books and editions in the Museum of which no second copy is known to be in existence. An enumeration of these rare books and editions would require long lists, the perusal of which would be rather trying. But I shall say a few words to show the importance of such early editions for the student. They possess, first, the advantage of being free from the misprints which crept in with every fresh republication. The art of editing books in a correct and scientific way is of a very recent date. And even Hebrew literature does not find that support from the public which would enable scholars to edit Jewish books in such a way as Roman and Greek classics are prepared by Oxford and Cambridge students. A new edition of a Hebrew book meant therefore an addition of new mistakes and misprints. And it is only by examining the *editiones principes* that the scholar finds his way out of these perplexities.

Another advantage is the fact that these early editions escaped the hand of the censor, whose office was not introduced till a comparatively late date. The same advantage is also possessed by the Hebrew books published at Constantinople, Salonica, and other Mohammedan cities. Only

Christian countries indulged in the barbarous pleasure of burning and disfiguring Jewish books. It is one of the most touching points in the life of R. David Oppenheim, of Prague, who spent all his life and fortune in collecting Hebrew works, and whose collection now forms one of the greatest ornaments of the Bodleian Library, that he was not allowed by the censor to enjoy the use of his treasures. He had to put them under the protection of Lipman Cohen, his father-in-law in Hanover, many hundreds of miles from his own home. With the exception of the Bible hardly any Jewish books escaped mutilation. In certain Christian countries some books were not allowed to be published at all; of others, again, whole chapters had to be omitted, while of others many passages had to be expunged. The words Roman, Greek, Gentile, were strictly forbidden, and had to be changed into Turks, Arabs, Samaritans, or worshippers of the stars and planets. One can imagine what confusion such stupid alterations caused. Fancy what blunders would have been committed in history if the old chroniclers had been compelled to change the Pope into the Grand Turk or the Shah of Persia, the Christian rulers into as many califs and pashas, or Rome and Athens into Pekin and Mecca!

It may perhaps be interesting to learn that Jews sometimes imitated their bitter enemies in this work of mutilation. Thus in the later editions of the *Book of Genealogies* by Abraham Zacuto,² a passage was left out reproducing the evidence given by the widow of Moses de Leon to the effect that the cabbalistic work, the Zohar, was a forgery manufactured by her poor dear husband. Another omission of this kind is to be found in the Code of R. Joseph Caro, mentioned above. Here the earliest editions declare,

in the heading of section 605, "a certain religious usage" to be "a custom of folly." In the republications, the last three words were left out. From such nonsensical omissions and changes only the earliest editions, which are abundant in the Museum, were exempt.

A remarkable feature about the books of this Hebrew collection also is that many of them are provided in the margin with manuscript notes by their former possessors. These often happen to bear very great names in literature. I shall only mention here R. Jacob Emden, Almanzi, Michael, Gerundi, and Heidenheim. Of the works written by R. Jacob Emden, the Museum possesses an almost complete author's copy with abundant corrections, notes, and emendations by the author himself. His works are still very popular among Polish and Russian Jews, especially his Prayer-Book, and his Responses. It would be advisable for publishers in these countries to avail themselves of this copy on the occasion of a new edition. Of Christian scholars I should name here Isaac Casaubon. A rather amusing mistake occurs in Ben-Jacob's *Treasure of Books* in connection with this name. Among the many valuable copies of Kimchi's grammatical work *Perfection*,³ possessed by the Museum, there is included one which belonged to Casaubon, and is full of notes by him. The author of the *Treasure* speaks of a *Perfection* with notes by Rabbi Yitzchak Kasuban. I was at first at a loss to guess who that Rabbi Casaubon might be. When examining Zedner I found it was no other than the famous Christian scholar, Isaac Casaubon. It is not known that Casaubon's ambition lay in this direction. But when Philo was regarded as a Father of the Church, Ben Gabirol quoted for many centuries as a Mohammedan philosopher,

why should not Casaubon obtain for once the dignity of a Rabbi?

After having given the reader some notion of the collection of printed works, I should like now to invite him to accompany me through the Manuscript Department of the Museum. But I am afraid that I shall make a bad guide here; for the Museum is still without a descriptive catalogue of the Hebrew manuscripts, which is the only means of enabling the student to obtain a general view of the number and nature of these works. The manuscript catalogue of Dukes goes only as far as 1856. It was, as we shall soon see, just after this time that the Museum made its largest and, to a certain degree also, its most valuable acquisitions in Hebrew manuscripts. The following remarks must, therefore, not be taken as the result of a systematic study of this collection, which would be quite impossible without the aid of a catalogue. They rest partly on the descriptions given of a certain number of manuscripts in the catalogue by Dukes, but for the greater part on occasional glances at this or that MS.

As to the history of the collection, it has grown out of small beginnings just as that of printed books. The collection of Dr. Sloane, which laid the foundation of the Museum Library, contained only nine Hebrew MSS. Later acquisitions, as the Harleian collection, the Cottonian collection, the Royal collection, and many other smaller collections marked as Additional up to 1854, increased the number of the Hebrew manuscripts to 232. Of much more importance was the Almanzi collection, bought by the trustees of the Museum in 1865, and consisting of 335 MSS. Of succeeding acquisitions I shall mention here only the Yemen MSS., which were brought

to this country by the famous Shapira. The number of Hebrew MSS. at the present day is said to exceed one thousand. But we must not forget that many MSS. contain more than one work; in some cases even three or four, so that the number of Hebrew works is far greater still.

I shall now speak of the nature and importance of these MSS. As to their contents they may be easily grouped under the following headings: Biblical MSS., Commentaries (to the Bible) and Super-Commentaries, parts of the Talmud and their Commentaries, Theology, Philosophy and Ethics, Massorah, Grammar and Lexicography, Cabalah, Poetry, Mathematics, Astronomy, Astrology and Magic, Historical and Polemical Literature, etc. All these branches of theological and secular learning and even of human folly are fairly represented in the collection of Hebrew MSS. in the Museum, though often only by a part or a fragment of a work.

Thus the Babylonian Talmud is to be found only in two MSS. (Harl. 5508 and Add. 25,717) both of them including 11 Tractates, hardly a third part of the whole work. Indeed poor "Rabbinus Talmud" had to go to the *auto de fé* on so many occasions that one cannot wonder if only disjointed limbs are to be found of him in libraries. The only complete MS. copy which escaped this vandalism is that in the Royal Library in Munich, from which Mr. Rabbinowicz has edited his monumental work, *Variae Lectiones of the Talmud*.

All other libraries, Oxford included, have to be satisfied with fragments. Still worse, as it is seen, fared the Jerusalem Talmud, and excepting the well-known copy in Leyden from which the Venice edition was prepared, not

even fragments of this Talmud are to be found in the majority of libraries. To my knowledge it is only the British Museum which can boast of the Jerusalem Talmud in MS. extending over *Order of Seeds* and one tractate of *Order of Festivals* ⁴ (Or. 2122-24) with commentaries of R. Solomon Syrillo, the first few pages of which were edited by Dr. Lehmann of Mayence. The Museum also possesses a great part of the Tosephta extending over 14 Tractates (Add. 27,296). Of Midrashim we find in the Museum two excellent manuscripts of the Genesis *Rabbah*, one of the Leviticus *Rabbah*, and one of the *Siphra* and the *Siphre* (Add. 27,169 and 16,406), besides two copies of the Midrash *Haggadol* and other Aagadic collections brought from Yemen. The *Midrash* by Machir b. Abba Mari to the minor prophets included in the Harleian collection (5704) is unique. Of Liturgies, besides a great number of MSS. representing the most peculiar rites, I shall mention the Machzor ⁵ Vitri (Add. 27,200-1) composed by the disciples of R. Solomon b. Isaac, and forming in itself almost a small library. For, apart from the prayers for festivals and week days which gave it its title, it includes, besides the *Sayings of the Fathers* with a large commentary, three of the Minor Tractates of the Talmud, many responses by German and French Rabbis, and a whole series of religious hymns by German and Spanish authors, and many other literary pieces. Cabbalah is represented by various valuable writings of the pre-Zoharistic time (see for instance Add. 15,299) and the works of R. Moses de Leon and R. Abraham Abulafia. Of Poetry, I shall point here to the Tarshish of R. Moses Ibn Ezra, the Makames by Judah Al Charisi (Add. 27,122), and the Divan of R. Abraham of Bedres (Add. 27,188). Of works

relating to grammar and lexicography, I may refer to a Codex (Add. 27,214) which contains the lexicon of R. Menahem ben Saruk, which is considered as the oldest Hebrew MS. in the Museum, dating from the year 1091. Of historical works, I mention the chronicle of R. Joseph the Priest (Add. 27,122) and the letter of R. Sherira Gaon (Arundel 51), the oldest existing copy of this work (1189), which was edited by Dr. Neubauer in his *Mediæval Jewish Chronicles*.

These examples will suffice to show the significance of the MSS. collection of this Library. And the student may rest assured that in whatever branch of Jewish thought he is interested, he will always find in the Museum some Hebrew manuscript useful for his purpose.

I ought now to say a few words as to the value of this collection of manuscripts. Now, if the work contained in a MS. has never been edited, as for instance the *Machzor Vitri*⁶ and so many others, its value is established by the mere fact of its existence. For those who published MSS. were not always guided by the best literary motives. And while they published and republished many books of which one edition would have been more than enough, many other works of the greatest importance for Jewish literature and history remained in manuscript. As an instance, it will suffice to mention here the *Zohar*, which has passed through twenty-four editions since the sixteenth century, whilst the earliest Jewish Midrash, the *Pessikta de Rab Kahana*, had to linger in the libraries till the year 1868, when it was edited by Mr. S. Buber. Thus there are still many pearls of Jewish literature which exist only in MS. Likewise most publishers were careless in their choice of the manuscript from which our editions

have been prepared. Almost the whole of Jewish literature will have to be re-edited before a scientific study of it will be possible. But such critical editions can only be obtained by the aid of the MSS. not yet made use of, in which better readings are to be found. From this fact even those MSS. the contents of which have been several times reprinted, as for instance the MSS. of the *Midrash Rabbah*, gain the greatest literary importance. And the more MSS. the editor of a work has at his disposal, the more certain is he of being able to furnish us with a good text.

But even when the whole of Jewish literature lies before the student in the best of texts, there will still remain a great charm about manuscripts. Printed books, like the great mass of the modern society for which they are prepared, are devoid of any originality. They interest us only as classes, and it is very seldom that they have a story of their own to tell. It is quite different with manuscripts, where the fact of their having been produced by a living being invests them with a certain kind of individuality. This is specially the case with Hebrew MSS., which were not copied by men shut up in cloisters, but by sociable people living in the world and sharing its joys and sorrows. Even women were employed in this art, and I remember to have read in some MS. or catalogue a post-script by the lady copyist, which, if I remember rightly, ran as follows: "I beseech the reader not to judge me very harshly when he finds that mistakes have crept into this work; for when I was engaged in copying it God blessed me with a son, and thus I could not attend to my business properly."

To be sure, some of these copyists were curious folk.

Their mind as well as that of the world around them must have been of a peculiar constitution hardly conceivable to us. Take, for example, Benjamin, the copyist of a certain Machzor in the Museum (Add. 11,639). This Machzor was written in times of bitter persecution. The copyist, who was himself a learned man, alludes in one place to the sufferings which the Jews in a certain French town had to undergo in the year 1276. On one of them, the martyr R. Samson, Benjamin the copyist composed a lamentation written in a most mournful strain. But this lamentation is followed by a wine-song, one of the jolliest and wildest parodies for the feast of Purim.

Speaking of this Machzor I should like to remark that it forms one of the greatest ornaments of the Museum. Besides including the whole of the Pentateuch, the above-mentioned Tarshish by R. Moses Ibn Ezra, and many other smaller literary pieces which would require a small volume to describe them properly, this MS. is most richly illuminated, and contains very many illustrations. The subjects of these illustrations are biblical, sometimes also apocryphal, such as—Adam and Eve in Paradise, Noah in the Ark, Abraham meeting the angels, Sarah behind the door listening to the conversation of her husband with his guests, Moses with the rod in his hands dividing the Red Sea, Samson riding on the back of a lion, Solomon on his throne, Daniel in the lion's den, the king Ahasuerus holding out the golden sceptre to Esther, Judith addressing Holofernes, the Leviathan, the mythical bird Bar Yochni, and many other similar subjects. In passing I recommend these illustrations and illuminations to the attention of the artist as the most worthy examples of Jewish ecclesiastical art,—if there is such a thing as a

special Jewish art. The artist will find the Museum best suited for this purpose, its collection being considered as the richest of the kind. Besides this Machzor I must also allude to the illuminated Bible (Or. 2226-28) written in Lisbon for R. Judah Alchakin — it is said to be one of the finest specimens of such works — and the illuminated Mishneh Torah of Maimonides, executed for R. Joseph of the famous Yachya family, also thought to be most artistically done. The liturgies for the Passover Eve service will also offer to the artist a rich harvest, especially Codex, Add. 27,210, which the wealthy Lady Rosa Galico presented to her son-in-law on his wedding-day, and Codex, Add. 14,762, even the binding of which is considered as an artistic curiosity.

Leaving now these marvels to the appreciation of the artist, the greatest wonder which suggests itself to us is how the Jews could maintain such a cultured taste in such unhappy times, and get the means of satisfying it. These reflections about the owners present themselves the more strongly to our mind when we meet with one of those old Jewish prayer-books, which in many cases formed the whole religious and literary treasure of the family. In their fly-leaves, in which the births and deaths of successive generations are very often registered, the *spiritus familiaris* seems to be still haunting the pages. When you turn them over and see the service for Passover Eve, are you not bound to think of the anxiety with which these poor creatures engaged in this ceremony lest they might be attacked suddenly by a fanatic mob? must you not ask how they could bear life under such circumstances? And when you turn a few more pages and arrive at the prayers read for the dead, must you not ask how did they die?

Were they perhaps burnt alive *ad majorem Dei gloriam*, or torn to pieces by a "saintly mob"? Take again the illuminated copies of the Bible and the Mishneh Torah, both of which were finished only a few years before the great expulsion of the Jews from Spain and Portugal, times when the earth already "burnt under their feet, and the heaven was also very unkind to them." And nevertheless Jews were still, as these MSS. show us, cultivating science and art. Another instance of such a devotion to science in spite of the unfavourable times may be seen from a colophon to Codex Or. 39. It contains the book *Nissim*, a philosophical treatise on the fundamental teachings of Judaism, together with a philosophical commentary on the Pentateuch by R. Nissim of Marseilles, a contemporary of R. Solomon ben Adereth in the thirteenth century. The Museum copy was written by R. Jacob, the son of David, who also added some annotations to the book. At the end he says: "I have copied this book *Nissim* for my own use, that I may study in it, I and my children and my grandchildren. . . . I have finished it to-day, Sunday, the 28th of Ab, 5333 (1573), at Venice, in the year of the expulsion which befell us on account of our sins." Now, only observe this poor R. Jacob, who has to go through all these horrors, yet is still occupied in copying MSS. for his own pleasure, and in meditating on the most complicated problems of philosophy and religion.

But it is not always stories of this heroic nature that the MSS. tell us. They betray also very much of the instability of human affairs and their weakness. You find in many copies the words that they must not "be sold or given in mortgage." But scarcely a generation has passed away, and they are already in the posses-

sion of a new owner, who writes the same injunction to be broken again by his children in their turn. In Codex 27,122, we find commendatory letters for a worthy poor man, who is so unhappy as to have two grown-up daughters, and not to have the means of supplying them with marriage portions. Indeed, he must have been very poor, not possessing even a book in his house, or else his troubles could not have been so great. For in Codex Harl. 5702, we find the owner saying: "To eternal memory that I have acquired this *Third Book of Avicena* from the hands of my father-in-law, R. Jekuthiel, as a part of my dowry."

As a sign of human weakness I give the following two instances. There lies before me a cabbalistic Codex (Add. 27,199), which acquired some notoriety from the fact of its having been copied by the famous grammarian, R. Elijah Levita, for his pupil Cardinal Aegidius. At the end of this MS. we read: "I (Levita) have finished (the copying of) this book on Wednesday, the day of Hoshana Rabba,⁷ 5277 (1516), on which day I have seen my head in the shadow of the moon. Praised be God (for it), for now I am sure not to die in the following year." These words relate to a well-known superstition, according to which, when a man is going to die in the course of the next year his shadow disappears from him on the preceding Hoshana Rabba. But is it not humiliating to see that the great Levita, who was superior to many prejudices of his time, and taught Christians Hebrew, and who denied the antiquity of the vowels in the Bible, which was considered by the great majority of his contemporaries as a mortal heresy—is it not humiliating to see this enlightened man trembling for his life on this night, and

anxiously observing his shadow? Another Codex lies before me (Add. 17,053), containing the Novellæ to three tractates of the Talmud. Its owner must accordingly have been a learned man. But in the fly-leaf of this MS. we read the following words: "Memorandum — Thursday, the 25th of Sivan, 5295 (1535), I have taken an oath in the presence of R. David Ibn Shushan and R. Moses de Castro, etc., not to play (cards) any more." I might perhaps suggest on this occasion that in our days when all sorts of Judaisms are circulating, a cooking Judaism, a racing Judaism, a muscular Judaism, and so many Judaisms more—it would be interesting to take up also the subject of playing Judaism, and to write its history.

In conclusion I shall mention the colophon to Codex Harl. 5713, which may have some interest for the English reader. It runs: "I have written it in honour of the noble and pious, etc., Humphrey Wanley, the noble Librarian of my Lord Treasurer. May his glory be increased. In the year 5474 (1714) in the holy community of London, under the reign of the noble and happy Queen Anne. May the Lord increase her splendour and glory." The signature of the copyist is "Aaron the son of Moses, born in the city of Navaschadok in Poland." By the way, we learn from this signature that the immigration of Polish Jews into this country had already begun in the time of Queen Anne, and perhaps still earlier.

Thus everything in a MS., the arrangement of the matter, the remarks of the owners, the signature of the copyist, sets the reader thinking, and contributes many a side-light to the history of the Jews.

XI

TITLES OF JEWISH BOOKS

It is now more than half a century since Isaac Reggio in his edition of Elijah Delmedigo's *Examination of Religion*, made the remark that this book adds to its other merits that of bearing a title corresponding to its contents, — a merit that is very rare in Jewish books. Reggio proceeds to give a few specimens confirming his assertion, and concludes his remarks with a eulogy on Delmedigo, who in this respect also had the courage to differ from his contemporaries. Zunz also once wrote an article on titles of books. But this article unfortunately appeared in some German periodical which the British Museum does not possess, and I could not even succeed in ascertaining whether Zunz treats at all of titles of Hebrew books, nor am I aware that the subject has been taken up by any other scholar, Isaac D'Israeli's few notes on the subject in his *Curiosities of Literature* being scarcely worth mention. It seems to me, however, interesting enough to deserve some illustration, though I can by no means hope to be complete.

The titles of the books contained in the Bible need not be discussed here; information concerning them is to be found in every critical introduction to the Old Testament. The Rabbinical works dating from antiquity also offer

little opportunity for reflection on their titles. The Talmud, as a work, has no title at all; for Talmud simply means "teaching" or "study." Sometimes it is termed ShaSS, an abbreviation of *Shisha Sedarim*,¹ meaning the Six Orders or divisions contained in the Mishnah. This last word means, according to some authors, "Repetition." Other Tannaitic collections of laws or expositions of the Scriptures are called "the Book" (Siphra), "the Books" (Siphre), or "Additions" (Tosephta to the Mishnah). The word *Baraita*² means the external Mishnah that enjoyed less authority than the Mishnah of R. Judah the Patriarch. Some approach to titles we find in the names given to the different tractates included in the Mishnah, as *Berachoth*, because it treats of Benedictions, *Peah*³ (Corner) which contains the particulars concerning the law in Lev. xix. and so forth. Of the few works quoted in the Talmud it will suffice to mention the *Seder Olam*, the Order of the World, the name of which is very suitable to the chronological contents of the book. In general, I may observe that as long as the law which prohibited the writing down of the Oral teachings was in force, there hardly existed Jewish books. But where there are no books there is also no need for titles. The few titles, however, which can be proved to be historical are simple and to the point. It is not till about the beginning of the Middle Ages, when this prohibitive law had, for reasons not to be explained here, been abolished, that we can speak of Hebrew books. But here also the Title-confusion begins.

In order that we may have some general view of the thousands of titles that are catalogued by the Jewish bibliographers, it will perhaps be well to arrange them under the following six classes:—

I. *Simple titles*, that have no other object than that of indicating the subject matter of the book. These are, as we have just seen, the only kind of titles known to antiquity. The few books which the Gaonim left us bear such simple titles as could have served as models to later generations. Among them may be mentioned the *Hala-choth* or collection of Laws, *Creeds and Opinions*, by R. Saadiah Gaon, the *Book on Buying and Selling*, by R. Hai Gaon, containing the laws relating to commercial transactions. It may be noticed that this last book is one of the best arranged in Jewish literature, and displays more systematising powers than even the Code of Maimonides. The greatest part of the literary activity of the Gaonim consists in their Responsa, in which they gave decisions on ritual questions, or explanations of difficult passages in the Talmud. The titles borne by the various collections of those Responsa belong to a period later than the author's. The great majority of the books produced by the Franco-German school may also be included in this class. They are termed "Commentaries," "Additions" or "Glosses," "Novellæ," or "Confirming Proofs," and similar modest titles which show both their relation to, and dependence on, another older authority. The largest collection of Midrashim we possess bears the simple title "Bag."⁴ Many of the Responsa satisfy themselves with the words "Questions to, and Answers by."

II. *Titles taken from the first word with which the book begins*, or from the first word of the Scriptural verse occurring first in the book. This class is strongly represented by the Midrashim. Thus the Midrash to the Song of Songs is also quoted as the Midrash *Chazitha*,⁵ "Midrash, Seest thou" (the first text with which this Midrash deals

being Proverbs xxii. 28). The Midrash to the Psalms is called Midrash *Shocher Tob*,⁶ "Midrash, He that diligently seeketh the good" (Prov. xi. 37). The Midrash containing the legendary story of the wars of the sons of Jacob with the Canaanites is quoted as Midrash *V'yisseu*,⁷ "Midrash, And they journeyed," as the story begins with the verse from Gen. xxxv. 5. And this is the case with the titles of many other Midrashim. Whether the work cited under the strange name of *Meat on Coals* did not begin with those words, containing some law relating to the salting of meat, I do not venture to decide. Under this class we may also arrange those books that are called after a phrase which is often used in the book, e.g., the Midrash *Yelamdenu* (He may teach us), or the *Vehizhir*, "And He commanded us," almost every paragraph in these books beginning with the phrases mentioned.⁸ Probably all the books belonging to this class received from the hands of their authors or compilers no titles at all. The student who had to quote them gave them names after the phrase or word which first caught his eye. In later centuries this class disappears almost entirely (see, however, Ben-Jacob's *Treasure*, p. 201, No. 827).

III. *Pompous titles.* The largest contributions to this class were made by the mystical writers. Books which profess to know what is going on in the heavens above and the earth beneath cannot possibly be satisfied with modest titles. Thus we have the "Book of Brightness" (Zohar), "the shining book" (Bahir), "the Confidential Shepherd" (Moses).⁹ The books which the Zohar quotes bear such titles as the Book of Adam, the Book of Enoch. The only excuse for the Zohar is that the manufacturing of such books with pseudo-epigraphical titles

had already begun in antiquity. It is not, however, till the Gaonic period that a whole apocryphal literature suddenly emerges which perplexes the Gaonim themselves. No one is spared. Angels, patriarchs, and martyrs are called upon to lend their names to these books. What one resents most is that history came within the range of the forger's activity. There is, for instance, the Josippon, which professes to be written by Josephus, the well-known Jewish historian of the first century. But in spite of all the care taken by the author to disguise himself in the garb of antiquity, the Josippon is a forgery of the ninth or tenth century. Of a similar kind is the Book of Jasher, containing legendary stories relating to Biblical personages. It pretends to be identical with the Book of Jasher quoted in Joshua x. 13 and 2 Sam. i. 18. Some sixty years ago a certain Mr. Samuel of Liverpool had the misfortune to make himself ridiculous by maintaining the pretensions of this book; for, indeed, it does not require much knowledge of the Agadic literature to see that the Book of Jasher is only a compilation of comparatively late Midrashim.

IV. *Titles suggested by other Titles.* As an instance of this we may take Maimonides' great Code of Law, which bears the title *Mishneh Torah*. The importance of the book made it the object of study for hundreds of scholars, who wrote their commentaries and glosses on it. Among the titles of the commentaries such Title-genealogies may be discovered as Maggid *Mishneh*, *Mishneh* Lammelech; which last word again suggested such titles as Emek ha-*Melech*, Shaar ha-*Melech*, and so on.¹⁰

The same process may be observed in other standard works, the importance of which made them a subject of

investigation and interpretation as the "Prepared Table," one of the glosses to which is called *Mappah*, "Tablecloth," whilst others provided it with the *Shewbread* and with *New Fruit*.

V. *Euphemistic Titles*, as "The Tractate of Joys," treating of funeral ceremonies and kindred subjects. It does not seem that this title was known to antiquity, but it is certain that already the earlier authorities quoted it by this name. "The Book of Life" (the German Jewish title of which is *Alle Dinim, von Freuden*), is the name of a very popular book containing the prayers to be read in the house of mourning as well as in the cemetery, which is also called the House of Life.

VI. *Titles taken from the Bible*, or Fancy Titles. This is the largest class of all, though it was utterly unknown in antiquity. It will be, perhaps, convenient to arrange this class of titles under the following sub-divisions. (a) Titles taken from the Bible, but also fulfilling the purpose of indicating the name of the author. For instance, "Seed of Abraham" (Ps. cv. 6), is the title of nine different books, the name of whose authors happened to be Abraham; "And Isaac entreated" (Gen. xxv. 21), is by Isaac Satanow on the Prayers; "Then Isaac sowed" (*ibid.* xxvi. 12), edited by R. Isaac Perles, contains an index to the Zohar. "Jacob shall take root" (Is. xxvii. 6) is the name of a book on Grammar and Massorah by R. Jacob Bassani. R. Joseph of Posen left two collections of sermons and commentaries on the Pentateuch, of which the one is called "And Joseph nourished" (Gen. xlvii. 12), the other "And Joseph gathered" (*ibid.* 14). Authors with the name of Judah are represented among others by such titles as "And this of Judah"

(Deut. xxxiii. 7), a treatise on the laws concerning the killing of animals; or "Judah shall go up" (Judges i. 2), a pamphlet containing a collection of prayers to be said on a journey. "Moses began" (Deut. i. 5) forms the title of three different books on various subjects, the authors of which had the name Moses. "Moses shall rejoice," a phrase occurring in the morning prayer for Sabbaths, is also the title of two books, the authors of which were named Moses. The "Rod of Aaron" enjoyed, as it seems, a goodly popularity; there are four bearing this name, not to speak of a fifth, "The Rod of Aaron brought forth buds" (Exod. xvii. 23), which is the name of a collection of Responsa by R. Aaron ben Chayim. But other Rods also were fashionable; there are, besides the five Rods of Moses, also Rods of Ephraim, Dan, Judah, Joseph, Naphtali, and Manasseh. By authors of the name of David we find books with the title "And David said," or a "Prayer of David," and other phrases occurring in the Psalms relating to David; whilst the "Tower of David" became the stronghold of other writers, and the "Shield of David" protected as many as nine more. The "Chariot of Solomon" (Cant. iii. 9) adorns the title-pages of five books by authors named Solomon. The Caraites Solomon Troki was so fond of that title that he called his two polemical treatises "He made himself a chariot," while R. Solomon of Mir's collection of sermons has the title, "This Bed which is Solomon's" (Cant. iii. 7). As to family names, there were not many authors in the enjoyment of that luxury (especially among the German Jews), but we find them indicating the fact of their being Priests or Levites. Among such books are the collection of Responsa, by R. Raphael Cohen, which has the title

"And the Priest shall come again" (Lev. xiv. 39), and the Cabbalistic treatise by R. Abraham Cohen, of Lask, with the title "And the Priest shall reckon unto him" (Lev. xxvii. 18). Probably the author deals with numbers. R. Hirsch Horwitz, the Levite, called his *Novellæ* to the Talmud "The Camp of Levi." The title "The Service of the Levite" (with allusion to Exodus xxxviii. 21) is borne by five other books by authors who were Levites. And there may be found hundreds of books with titles suggesting the Priestly or Levitical descent of their authors. Most anxious is Joseph Ibn Kaspi (Joseph the Silvern, so called after his native place Argentière, in the south of France) to provide most of his numerous books with some Biblical titles combined with silver, as a "Bowl of Silver" (Numb. vii. 13), or "Points of Silver" (Song of Songs i. 11), or "Figures of Silver" (Prov. xxv. 10), and other similar phrases. On the other hand Azulai manages to indicate at least one of his three Hebrew names, Chayim Joseph David, in most of his works, of which the number exceeds seventy, as Chayim Shaal,¹¹ "He asked Life" (Ps. xxi. 4), or "The knees of Joseph" (alluding to Gen. xlviii. 12), and "Truth unto David" (Ps. cxxxii. 11).

(*b*) The Tabernacle with its furniture was also a great favourite with many authors. There are not only six tabernacles (two on Cabbalah, two on grammar, and two on Talmudical subjects), but also three "Arks of the Testimony," two "Altars of gold," two "Tables of Shewbread," four "Candlesticks of the Light," two "Sockets of Silver," and two "Pillars of Silver." Others again preferred the vestments of the priests as the "Plate of Judgment," the "Robe of the Ephod," the "Mitre of Aaron," the "Plate

of Gold," the "Bell and Pomegranate," "Wreathen Chains," and the "Arches of Gold." Many of these books were written by authors claiming to be priests. (c) But besides the canonical, other costumes were also fashionable. R. Mordecai Yafeh composed ten books, every one of them bearing the name of some garment or apparel, as "Apparel of Royalty," "Apparel of Blue," "Apparel of White," and so the whole suit with which Mordecai went out from the presence of the king (Esther viii. 15). These ten works range from codifications of the law and occasional sermons to philosophy, astronomy, and Cabbalah. By other writers we have three "Coats of many colours" (Gen. xxxvii. 4), one "Bridal Attire," and the "Thread of Scarlet" is not missing. (d) The ingredients for incense as well as other articles used in the Tabernacle or in the Temple were also fancied by some authors, and we have two books with the title of "Principal Spices," two "Pure Myrrh," three "Arts of the Apothecary," one "Oil of Holy Ointment," five "Meat Offerings mingled or dry," three or four "Flour of the Meat Offering," and also one "Two Young Pigeons" (Bene Yonah) by R. Jonah Zandsopher. But the appetite of the authors did not stop at these holy things. It extended also to such lay articles as "Spiced Wine," "Juice of Pomegranate" (Cant. viii. 2), "Forests of Honey," the "Book of the Apple," and "Seven Kinds of Drink."

(e) Field and flock also suggested to Hebrew writers as well as to Mr. Ruskin such titles as "The Fruit of the Hand," the "Rose of Sharon," the "Lily of the Valleys," or "The Shepherds' Tents," and "In the Green Pastures" (Ps. xxiii. 2).

The specimens given for every class may with very little trouble be doubled and redoubled. But it is not my inten-

tion to reproduce here whole catalogues. Reggio thinks all such titles, which do not correspond with the context of the book, absurd and confusing. He suggests that the Jews followed in this respect the Arabic writers. There is no doubt that Reggio is not altogether wrong in his complaint. Almost all the titles included in class vi., as the reader might have observed, never indicate to the student the subject of which the books treat. How can one guess that the *Responsa*, the *Dance of Mahanaim* (two companies), is of a polemical nature against the tendencies of reform? This list may be lengthened by hundreds of titles. But even these incomprehensible titles are better than the *Chad Gadyah Lo Israel* (One Kid No Israel),¹² the un-Hebrew title of a pamphlet trying to prove the un-Jewish origin of the well-known folk-song sung on Passover Eve. But, on the other hand, it must not be overlooked that even this class has, though not always, something suggestive and even practical about it. The "Choice of Pearls" is undoubtedly more attractive than the prosaic "Collection of Proverbs and Sayings," which is what the book contains. "Understanding of the Seasons" (1 Chr. xii. 32), sounds also better than the simple "Collection of Sermons on different occasions." "The Lips of those who Sleep" recommends itself as a very suggestive title for a catalogue, especially when one thinks of the Agadic explanation given to Cant. vii. 10, according to which the study of the book of a departed author makes the lips of the dead man to speak. Such titles as "Bunch of Lilies" for a collection of poems are still usual with us. Such a title as the "Jealousy Offering," or the "Law of Jealousies," in polemical literature is very appropriate for its subject. R. Jacob Emden, who named one

of his pamphlets "Rod for the fool's back" (Prov. xxvi. 3), will be envied for his choice by many a controversialist even to-day. Wittily devised is the pun-title, "City of Sihon" for a mathematical book by R. Joseph Tsarphathi, alluding to Numb. xxi. 27, "For Hesbon (reckoning) is the City of Sihon."

Other titles were probably intended more as mottoes than titles. "Go forth and behold, ye daughters of Zion" (Cant. iii. 11), is put in the title-page of R. Jacob's German-Jewish paraphrase of the Pentateuch, which was written chiefly for the use of ladies. "Let another man praise thee and not thine own mouth, a stranger and not thine own lips" (Prov. xxvii. 2), forms the title of a book extending over only one and a half page in quarto. It contains letters by seven Rabbis (among them R. Liva of Prague) recommending the Ascetic, R. Abraham Wangos, who has a daughter to marry, and wants also to make a pilgrimage to the Holy Land, as deserving the support of his brethren.

There is also another objection to these titles. It is that they seem sometimes not quite consonant with our notions of modesty. Thus we have "Desirable and Sweet" on astronomy, "Sweeter than Honey" or "He shall comfort us," and many others of this kind. But it must not be thought that we have a right to infer from the title to the author. There is, indeed, an anecdote that three authors were rather too little careful about the choice of their titles, namely Maimonides in calling his Code *Mishneh Torah* (which is the traditional title of the Book of Deuteronomy), R. Moses Alshech in calling his homiletical commentaries *Torah* of Moses, and R. Isaiah Horwitz in calling his book *Shene Luchoth ha-*

Berith (The Two Tables of the Covenant). These authors, as the story goes, had for their punishment that their works are never quoted by the titles they gave to them, the former two being usually cited as Rambam or Alshech, whilst the last is more known by its abbreviated title of SHeLa¹³ than by its full name.

I do not remember where I have read this story, but I am quite sure that its pious author would have been more careful about repeating it had he known that this accusation against Maimonides was a favourite topic with apostates, who thought to hit Judaism in the person of its representative Maimonides. But, as R. Solomon Duran in his polemical work remarks, Maimonides was too much of a truly great man to find any satisfaction in such petty vanity. Nor do I believe that even the character of less-known authors can in any way be impugned by the seemingly conceited titles of their books; just as on the other hand the humility of the author is not proved by calling his book "The Offering of the Poor," or other modest titles. The fancy title was in common use, and was therefore a commonplace with no significance whatever. The real disadvantage of such titles lies in the fact that, as already pointed out, they conceal from the student the contents of the book which he might otherwise consult in the course of his researches.

Did these authors perhaps foresee that there would come a time in which index-knowledge would pass for deep scholarship? and did they thus by using these obscure titles try to put a check on the dabblers who speak the more of a book the less they have read of its contents? If this be the case we can only admire their foresight.